the weekly Standard

MAY 22, 2000 $3.95

GEORGE W. BUSH'S BUSY WEEK
DAVID BROOKS • TUCKER CARLSON

Three Cheers for Sprawl!

BY FRED BARNES

SPRING BOOKS ISSUE

- Danielle Crittenden • Noemie Emery
- Victor Davis Hanson
- John Podhoretz • Gary Schmitt

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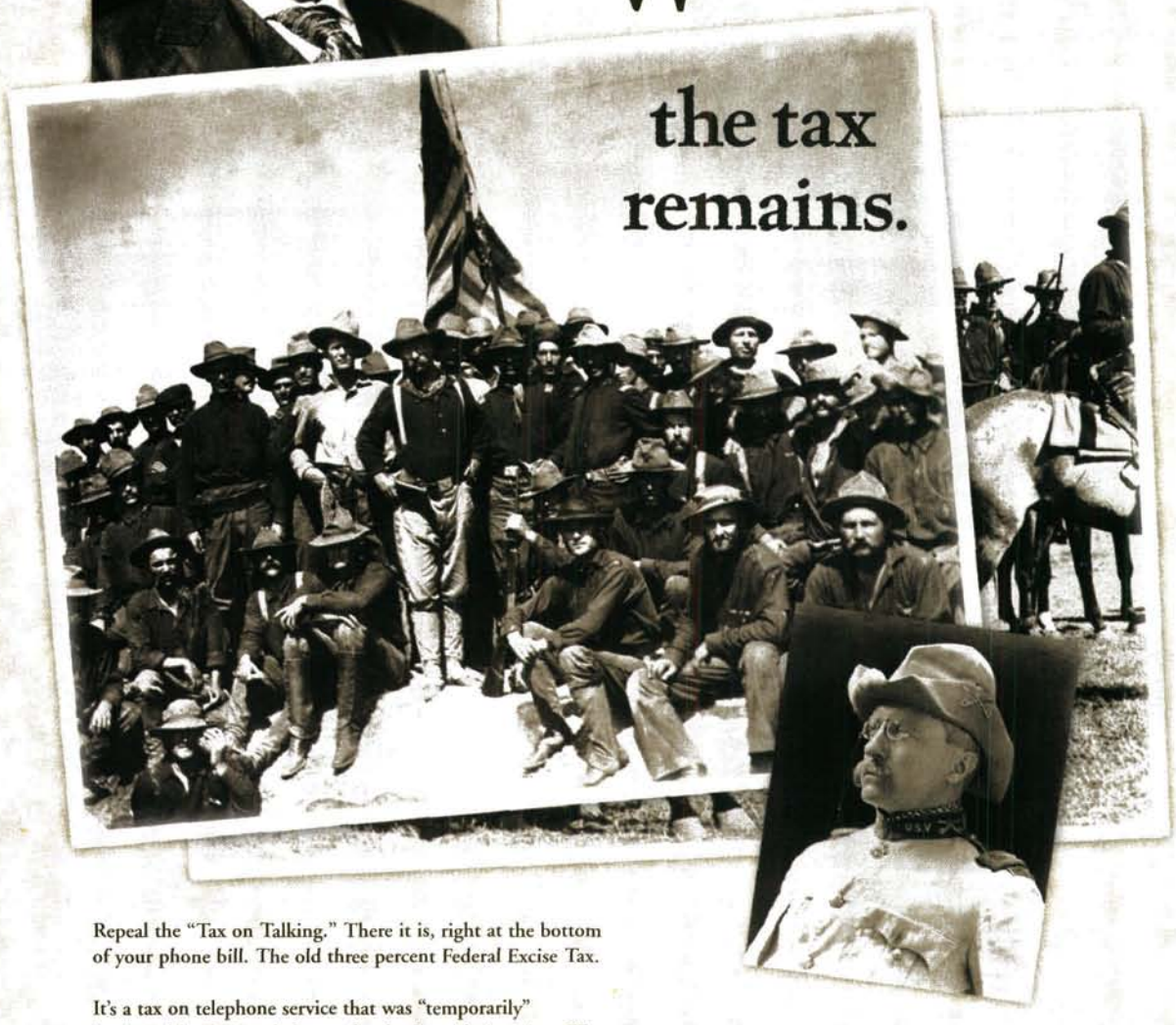
The Spanish-American War is over —

the tax remains.



Repeal the "Tax on Talking." There it is, right at the bottom of your phone bill. The old three percent Federal Excise Tax.

It's a tax on telephone service that was "temporarily" instituted in 1898 to help pay for the Spanish-American War. The war is paid for, the tax remains.

In 1898, telephone service was a luxury, so the tax affected only the richest Americans. Today, the "Tax on Talking" isn't just on regular telephone service, but includes cellular service and access to the Internet. Everyone pays the tax — with the heaviest burden on low and fixed income Americans, who spend a larger percentage of their incomes to pay the tax.

Repealing the "Tax on Talking" will lower phone bills and save the average family up to $50 per year. It's time to end the longest "temporary" tax in American history.

Support the Portman-Matsui Bill (H.R. 3916) and the Roth-Breaux Bill (S. 2330).

Repeal the Tax on Talking

A Pro-Growth, Pro-Family Progressive Coalition

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Dick Gephardt, Civility Paladin

A truism about the Washington press corps is the Barone Rule, enunciated in this magazine by columnist Michael Barone. It says the press isn't reliably pro-Democrat, but can be counted on to be anti-Republican. Once in a blue moon, however, there's an exception, and last week House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt and his sidekick Patrick Kennedy, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, got caught in one. The DCCC filed a racketeering lawsuit against House Republican Whip Tom DeLay for allegedly leaning too hard on potential donors. No doubt Kennedy, who doesn't brush his hair without Gephardt's approval, and Gephardt himself expected the media to fall in line and salute. After all, DeLay is a favorite whipping boy of the press.

But the preposterous lawsuit touched off a backlash instead. The *Washington Post* condemned it. The *Hill* called it absurd. *USA Today* was skeptical. The *New York Times* ran a piece by Paul Begala, a political adviser to President Clinton, labeling the lawsuit "wrong ethically, legally and politically." On ABC's *This Week*, George Stephanopoulos, who worked for Gephardt before becoming a Clinton aide, said it was "stupid politics and sad civics." Members of Congress told reporters they heard nothing but criticism of the suit on the House floor, most of it aimed at Gephardt.

After all, Gephardt is not only Kennedy's boss but the guy who told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in April that if he becomes speaker he'll embrace bipartisanship, end "the cycle of near violence," and "restore a sense of civility." Who'd have dreamed that a reporter—in this case Morton Kondracke of *Roll Call*—would actually throw these quotes back in Gephardt's face? Not Gephardt or Kennedy, that's for sure. ♦

Make Sure They're Undistinguished

Conservative critics of "diversity" policies have argued for years that the word is simply a euphemism for a policy of quotas—i.e., favoritism on the basis of sex or race—whose beneficiaries receive jobs or opportunities for which they are otherwise unqualified. Do defenders of diversity secretly agree?

Consider a remarkable passage in a May 8 *Washington Post* article about the "diversity" of corporate boards of Washington-area Internet companies. Reporter Jerry Knight notes that Franklin Raines, the chairman of Fannie Mae, and Colin Powell both serve on the board of America Online. But AOL, according to Knight, doesn't deserve any political points for naming two black men to its board, because the men are "too prestigious to be considered representatives of racial diversity." Indeed, writes Knight, "that is true of the people of color who serve on the boards of most other local Internet companies."

So the very fact that people are eminently well qualified to serve on corporate boards ipso facto means they don't count as "diversity" appointments? THE SCRAPBOOK thinks there's an ugly premise at work here, though maybe it's just the resurfacing of Nebraska senator Roman Hruska's famous dictum that the mediocre, too, "are entitled to a little representation." ♦

Great Moments in Academic Freedom

According to a May 8 report in the *New York Times*, Princeton University's prestigious Chinese language program at Beijing Normal University was attacked by a Chinese academic for "infiltrating American ideology into Chinese Language teaching." As the *Times* recounted it, "the Princeton-based authors of the teaching materials have always had to adapt their textbook somewhat for use in China. But this year 'was much more unpleasant and specific,' said Professor Chou [of Princeton]. 'And the changes they wanted were extensive and not negotiable. It was basically a threat.'" Indeed, the Chinese university "demanded that Professor Chou delete eight essays entirely and modify large chunks of other lessons before a contract could be signed. Sections on how the growing use of e-mail promotes free speech and the hazards of walking through Beijing traffic had to be dropped."

Princeton's response to the threat? It caved. "Professor Chou . . . is modifying the material and said the program would continue." ♦

Cuban Defects to Live with Miami Uncle

No, we're not referring to Elián (who is busy on the Democratic party fund-raising circuit these days), but to Mario Miguel Chaoui, member of a college baseball delegation from Cuba, who decided two weeks ago at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport that he would much rather stay here in America than return to his Communist homeland. His uncle Arturo met him at the airport, asked his nephew if he

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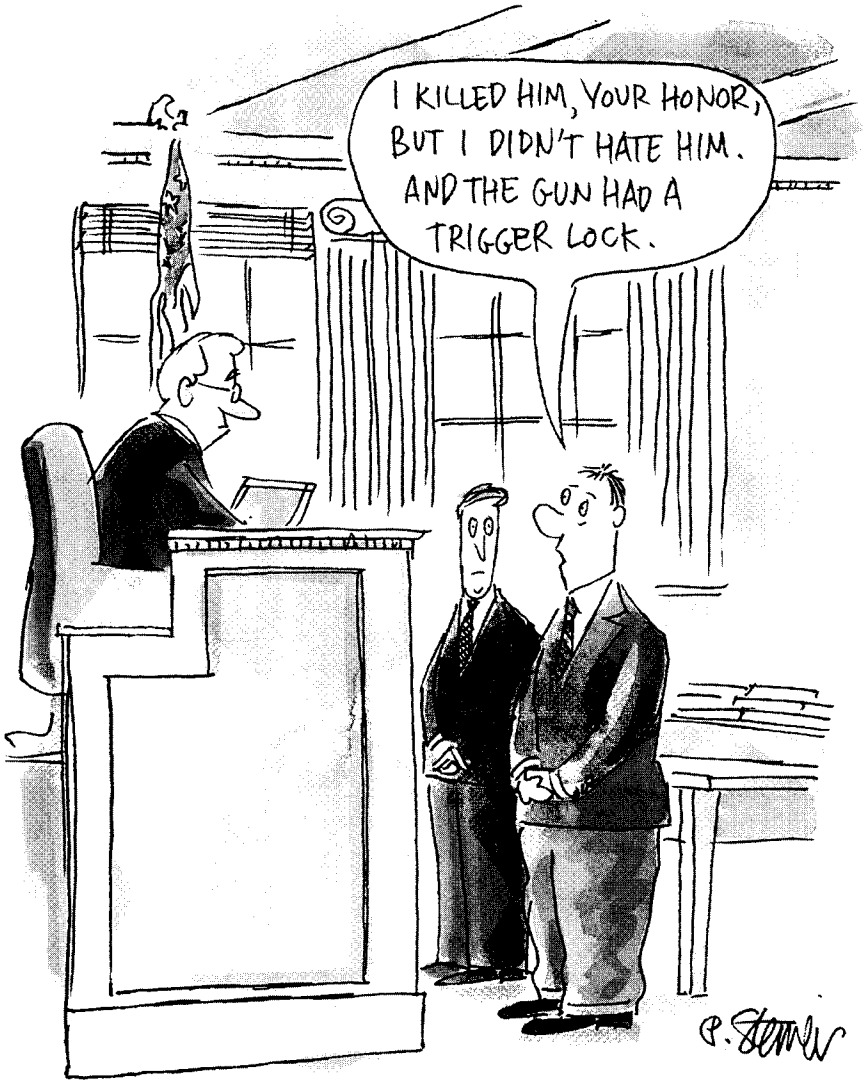

wanted to defect, and two days later, Mario Miguel was in Miami explaining his decision to seek political asylum. "It was very difficult for me, but I had to do it. . . . It was a decision to have liberty, to reconcile with my family here." By family, he means his uncle and his grandmother—both his parents and a younger sister were left behind in Cuba.

Some of his former teammates have called him a traitor, but Chaoui allows that they "had to say that." Meanwhile, Rev. Dennis Dease, the president of the University of St. Thomas (who hosted the Cubans), seemed mystified by the defection, saying, "This is his own choice. I respect that. But I've been to the country and I see that people can be happy there. It's a great time of change in Cuba." Easy for him to say.

Chaoui, who turns 21 this week, said he intends to "learn the language, perfect it . . . and, of course, the dream of every Cuban ballplayer is to play in the major leagues, to play professional baseball. But first comes study."

This is a heartwarming human interest story about an uncle who believed his nephew had "a better future in this country," though a future that meant leaving behind his immediate family in order to live in freedom. And it's a story you'll be hard-pressed to find in print, despite its seeming topicality. Unless you live in the Twin Cities or Miami, you'd have to scour the major newspapers to read about this defection. There was a single mention in the *Washington Post*, buried on the second page of the sports section. And how many mentions in the *New York Times*? Zero. ♦

The Community of Some Democracies

The first-ever global conference of democratic countries, a gathering hosted by the Polish government and the United States, is scheduled for Warsaw at the end of June. Foreign ministers from democratic countries around the globe will gather there to discuss strengthening democratic institutions and processes. The State Department boasts on its website that this will include "the full range of countries that have taken the democratic path."

Except Taiwan. And this exception despite the fact that the change in government in Taiwan this year represents the first peaceful and democratic transfer of power in 5,000 years of recorded Chinese history—an event rich with significance, one might think, for promoters of democracy.

No doubt embarrassed by the obvious omission of such a deserving participant, the State Department is attributing the decision to a policy of including only United Nations members—a transparent bit of legalism that happens to exclude only Taiwan. Oh, and besides, says a State Department official when asked about the omission, the invitations are "coming from the Poles."

Perhaps it's a useful lesson for the infant Chinese democracy on Taiwan. For all the benefits democracy bestows, it still doesn't guarantee principled forthrightness and courage at the top. ♦

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Casual

Slow and Heavy Wins the Rights

Here's good news: The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has just voted 11-0 to ban discrimination against fat people. The District of Columbia had already adopted such a law—no Ted Kennedy jokes, please!—and so had the state of Michigan, as well it should. I was just in Michigan, and at least two-thirds of the inhabitants beep when they back up. But San Francisco is a famously thin and wispy place. There's hardly a dirigible gut to be found within its city limits. Obviously the Board of Supervisors is acting from simple trendiness. Bless them. The trend comes just in time for me.

I'm not a complete dessert scow. Yet. But I'm in my fifties and looking a bit like Brazil where I used to resemble Argentina. Well, I say it's a poor man who can't build a shed over his tool. Prejudice against us wide-loads should, by all means, be made illegal—especially the very strong prejudice that cute young women seem to display when we ask them, "Do you come here often?" or "What's your sign?" I'm happily married myself, so this type of insensitivity to People of Pudge does not affect me directly. But I'm thinking of my fellow middle-aged slobs and how their rights are being violated in Hooters franchises every night, nationwide. Also, I presume that the new civil flab laws apply to cute young wives, and that henceforth it will be a hate crime for a certain particular cute young wife to laugh out loud when I emerge, in a Herman Melville-inspiring manner, from the hot tub.

Government protection of pie wagons is law-giving at its most noble, legislation worthy of a Solon or a Hammurabi—assuming that they were porkers too. But the San Francisco Board of Supervisors does not go far enough in its concern for oppressed minorities (or majorities, as the case may be, since current National Institutes of Health statistics indicate that everybody in America except Calista Flockhart is overweight). Yes, fatsos need the help of elected officials. But then so do boneheads. Of course, many elected officials *are* boneheads, but there is hardly room in Congress, state legislatures, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, etc., for all of the country's nitwits. Meanwhile, numb-

skulls lag woefully in college admissions, employment opportunities, career advancement, and remembering to open the garage door before backing the car out. (And don't those garage door repairmen charge like the dickens?) How long can America bear the shame of its bigotry towards the dim? When—at long last—will we make bias against stupidity punishable by law?

Think of all the things that our nation owes to birdbrains. The very voyage to America in the *Mayflower* itself was a pretty dumb idea, not to mention the settlement of the West with its log hovels, Indian scalpings, and San Francisco Board of Supervisors. What would be the state of professional athletics in the United States without hockey score I.Q.'s among players, fans, team owners, and businesses willing to pay for Super Bowl television advertising time? Indeed, our entire entertainment industry depends upon a monumental unintelligence the likes of which is . . . wearing a tone-on-tone shirt-tie-suit combo and asking people with hockey score I.Q.'s monumentally unintelligent questions on a quiz show. The stock market depends on it, too. (N.B., anyone seeking a terrific deal on quite a bit of Iridium stock contact me c/o this magazine.) And without the mentally challenged, Internet chat rooms would be empty and e-mail unused. Then there's politics. Just imagine politics with its cretinous element subtracted. There would be no Republican candidates. There would be no Democratic voters. The whole system would collapse.

The fat and stupid are a vital part of America. We need forceful legislation and wide-ranging government programs to ensure that America's fattest and stupidest people receive the rights and opportunities, the benefits, the hopes for a brighter future that every citizen of this Republic deserves, plus a chance to run the mutual fund that my IRA is in. Although that has happened already.

And, speaking of NASDAQ, there still remains one more pressing issue of equality that must be addressed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and all the other governmental bodies in the land. There lingers in our society a bitter, narrow-minded residue of intolerance for bad people. If our laws are there to protect all Americans, then why do we allow these laws to be used to send some Americans to prison just because they took a trip to Disney World with my wife and daughter and tried to write it off on my taxes as a business expense? This is not what America is about. We need to search our hearts about this issue, and we also need to get a triple-patty burger from Wendy's with "Biggie" fries and watch *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. Meanwhile, if you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers on your big, fat head.

P. J. O'Rourke

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A Matter of Death or Life...

Kirk Bloodsworth, shown here with his wife Brenda, was sentenced to death in Maryland in 1984. Nine years later, irrefutable DNA evidence proved his innocence.

The wrong people are being sentenced to death and it's a national crisis.

During the same period 628 executions were carried out, 87 wrongly convicted men and women have been cleared. On January 31, 2000, Governor George Ryan declared a death penalty moratorium in Illinois because of the state's "shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row." Unfortunately, Illinois is not alone. We are the National Committee to Prevent Wrongful Executions, death penalty supporters and opponents who have come together to find answers for a system in crisis.

It's time to do something NOW.

For more information:
www.constitutionproject.org
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Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

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To Pack or Not to Pack

Fred Barnes's article "Have Gun, Will Vote" is as clear a piece on this subject as I have seen (April 24/May 1).

A lot has been said about the concealed handgun laws in Texas. I have one and can tell you that no group could be better screened. You are denied a license not only if you are an accused or convicted felon, but if you're a parent delinquent in child support, an individual delinquent in your taxes, or have ever been arrested for DWI. On top of that, anyone with a concealed handgun license accused of committing a crime is charged with a one-degree higher level of the crime than someone without the license. We're treated as strictly as law enforcement officers.

Back before the licensing, I could not pick up the paper or watch local TV without seeing stories about a carjacking or hearing of some lady held up or mugged in a shopping center parking lot. Now it is a rarity to hear of such events. I know that concealed handgun licensing is not the complete answer, but a potential wrongdoer not knowing if his victim is armed has made a difference. I do not pack, nor do any of my friends that have concealed handgun licenses, but would-be assailants don't know that.

A few weeks ago, my wife and I had to stop for a traffic light on a feeder street beside an elevated section of freeway. Two people immediately began to cross the road toward our car. They had been walking along the other side. I feigned to be getting something from under the seat. They stopped in their tracks and as I proceeded down the street I could see in the rear view mirror that they walked back to the side where they were originally walking. They had nothing to sell, were not hitchhiking, and did not appear to be ex-New York City squeegee workers. The threat of the unknown may have kept us from becoming victims.

Aubrey Cruse III
Pasadena, TX

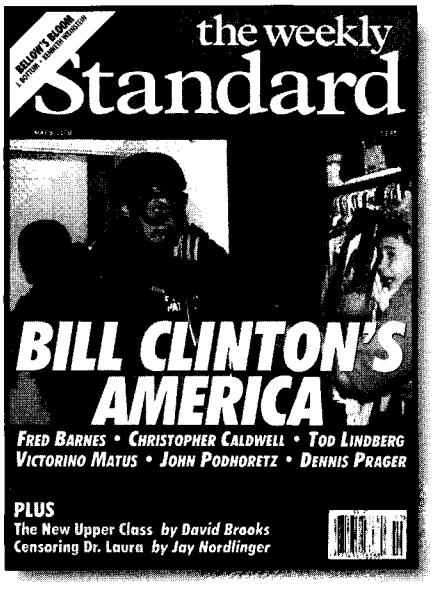
Who Wants S'Morality?

Joe Loconte argues that to require the Boy Scouts of America to accept an openly gay man as a scoutmaster is to infringe upon freedom of religion ("The Boy Scouts' Day in Court," April 24/ May 1).

He bases his argument on the fact that 65 percent of Scout troops are sponsored by religious bodies and he implies that they are offshoots of those religions.

When I was a Boy Scout in the 1950s the troop met in the neighborhood Lutheran church, where I was also a member. While most of the boys and leaders were Lutheran, there were a few Catholic and Jewish Scouts. At that time our pastor and most of the congregation thought that gambling was immoral.

If we had imposed our morality



upon the Scout troop we could have expelled those boys who attended houses of worship that raised money through bingo games and Las Vegas nights.

I believe private clubs should be permitted to discriminate against anyone for any reason without court interference. However, we are living in a time when many people, both religious and irreligious, do not accept the proposition that it is immoral to be sexually attracted to one's own gender. The Boy Scouts of America would do well to specify what they mean by "morally straight" rather than assume we are all in agreement.

Kenneth Hermann
New York, NY

Little Rock Rumors

Contrary to Stephen Bates's recent review of Susan Schmidt and Michael Weisskopf's *Truth at Any Cost: The Unmasking of Bill Clinton*, I did not spread the absurd rumor that Kenneth Starr had a mistress in Little Rock ("What I Saw at the Impeachment," May 8). Rather, I did everything I could to debunk it. That Schmidt and Weisskopf's book states otherwise only demonstrates how easily manufactured falsehoods trump facts when personal and political rivalries are at stake.

It's true that I faxed James Carville a brief note in December 1996 mentioning gossip then sweeping Little Rock about Starr's illicit love life. It was sent as the cover sheet accompanying a column of mine he'd asked to see. It's also true, however, that my faxed note explicitly compared the tale to "The Clinton Chronicles," a lurid video filled with near-delusional lies about the president. "If he stays here long enough," I wrote Carville, "somebody's gonna bring out 'The Starr Chronicles.'" I figured the likelihood of Starr's having an Arkansas mistress was roughly equivalent to that of the video's charge that Bill Clinton ran a drug-smuggling and money-laundering cartel. Carville shared my skepticism, as did every Little Rock journalist I know.

Furthermore, as I told Susan Schmidt when she called me, I'd written a column in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* debunking the Starr rumor. It appeared on March 4, 1998, at the height of the Lewinsky frenzy. "This baseless canard," I wrote, "was first published in the semi-underground [Arkansas] newsletter 'Bullwhiz' more than a year ago. In the interim, I've personally warned at least a half-dozen national reporters not to waste their time and resources pursuing it. While I'd laugh for a month if Starr got caught with his pants down . . . the existence of the tale merely illustrated an Arkansas fact of life some of us have tried in vain to warn them about: that as an island of relative cosmopolitanism in a sea of sex-obsessed fundamentalists, Little Rock is perpetually awash with sexual rumors, mostly false."

By way of discovery in a lawsuit, the

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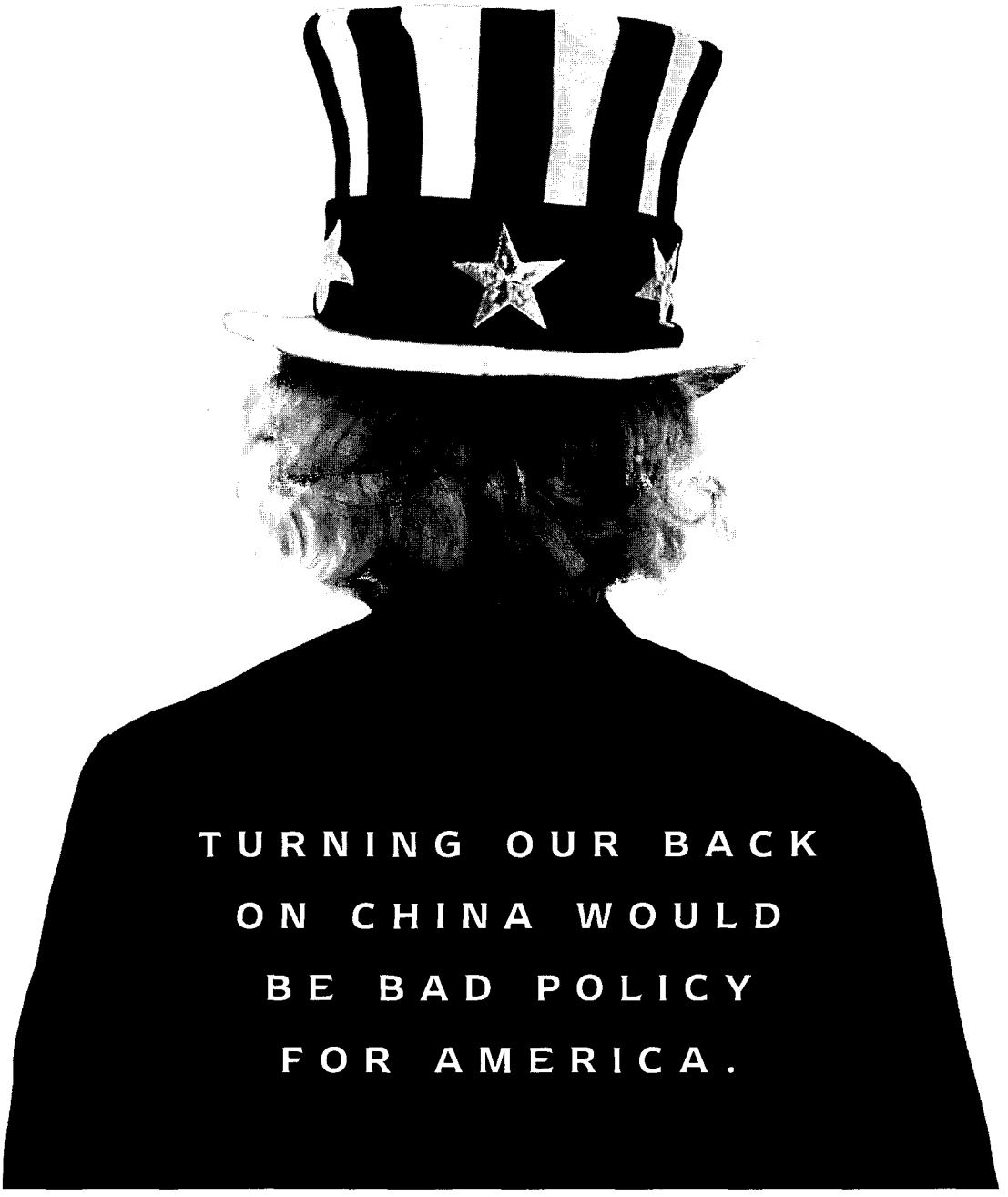

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Right now, China is effectively closed to foreign insurance firms - but that's changing rapidly. America's competitors from Europe and Japan are poised to enter this rapidly growing marketplace. If Congress turns its back on China now, American companies and American investors will be frozen out of the world's largest marketplace. That would be bad policy for America.

Tell Congress PNTR with China is good policy for all Americans.

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fax then fell into the hands of Larry Klayman of Judicial Watch, who gave it to the *Washington Times*. Without asking me for a comment, reporter Bill Sammons wrote a June 15, 1998, article selectively quoting parts of two sentences in such a manner as to imply that I endorsed what I'd in fact mocked. "Mr. Lyons alerted Mr. Carville," Sammons wrote, "that a Little Rock lawyer 'assured me with the certitude people always bring to these things that KENNETH STARR HAS A HONEY right here in town. I submit this for your amusement.'" Although an alert reader ought to be able to detect the skepticism even in that fragment, the damage was done.

Unfortunately, I never saw the *Washington Times* article until after learning of the false charge in the Schmidt-Weisskopf book. Interestingly, an error common to both versions—I'd actually written that the wife of a prominent attorney told me about Starr's apocryphal lover—makes it appear that Schmidt and Weisskopf never saw the fax to Carville, but based their account on a secondhand source. This after Carville and I both told Schmidt she had it backwards.

GENE LYONS
Little Rock, AR

SO MUCH TO SAY

I BARELY KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN critiquing what can only be considered a special edition of THE WEEKLY STANDARD devoted to your contributors' rage at a boy being reunited with his father. Rather arbitrarily, let's start with John Podhoretz's celebration of what he perceives as a resolidified anti-Communist alliance on the right, one that welcomes back to the fold the extremist Pat Buchanan ("The Return of the Useful Idiots," May 8). In a rather delicious bit of irony, in the very next article ("The Right's New Moral Equivalence"), Tod Lindberg banishes from that alliance social conservatives like Steve Largent who have the temerity to suggest that the United States government has no higher moral claim than the Cuban government to strip a father—one as to whom there is no evidence whatsoever that he is abusive or otherwise unfit—of the right to claim custody of his child. "[C]all it Largentism," Lindberg helpfully suggests. No, call it Americanism.

Christopher Caldwell presumes to instruct Juan Miguel González on proper manners when he reprimands him for saying anything but "thank you" to his Miami relatives for providing Elián with a temporary home ("Rule of Lies"). Has it occurred to Caldwell that the Miami relatives' assumption that this courtesy entitled them to take permanent custody of Elián from his father might have caused Mr. González to feel the slightest bit of legitimate rancor? As for his "sitting on his duff" in Cuba, how can you ascribe totalitarian powers to the Cuban government while callously criticizing Cuban citizens who lack the means to resist those powers?

Fred Barnes's screed ("No Truth, No Justice") is based on three assumptions. First, Barnes appears to believe that while the Immigration and Naturalization Service has sufficient authority to make custody decisions in these circumstances (a matter distinct from the asylum issue), it should not seek to enforce its decisions if they are resisted. One wonders how far Barnes wishes to extend this philosophy of mob rule and impotent government.

Second, Barnes naively believes that the Miami relatives, after five months of engaging in stalling negotiations and issuing defiant statements to the press, were close to conceding on the issue of returning custody to Juan Miguel (a point the Justice Department repeatedly stated was nonnegotiable). Does he also believe in the Tooth Fairy? Finally, Barnes argues that when law enforcement officials are charged with entering a home filled with people who have refused to comply with lawful instructions—a house surrounded by hostile demonstrators, in an area enveloped by strong emotional antipathy to federal authority—there must be absolute proof that someone may use a weapon against them before they can brandish stronger weapons to dissuade such a person. A "vague statement" is not sufficient? Let Barnes try convincing the families of policemen throughout this nation of that logic.

The separate lists, based on anecdotal evidence, of the media's anti-Cuban American prejudice (compiled by Victorino Matus) and pro-Communist toadying (compiled by John Podhoretz) are, as usual with such lists, a mixed bag. Matus confuses genuine bigotry against Cuban-Americans and their culture with abhorrence for the conduct of the mob outside the Miami relatives' home and of the relatives inside ("The Media Mob vs. Cuban-Americans"). Podhoretz is more on target with his list, though he nonetheless includes those who expressly note Cuba's real government-inspired poverty and harsh political repression while also trying to paint a complete picture. An honest portrayal of Cuba, one that gives the impression that life there is a special brand of hell, though not an unmitigated hell, is hardly com-symp reporting.

Finally, there is the bottom of the barrel, the rather shocking argument advanced by noted "writer and theologian"—and, of course, radio talk show host—Dennis Prager ("Bloody Nonsense"). Amazingly, Prager argues that a birth parent, even one who played a major role in raising his child, should never be presumed in the eyes of the state to be sufficiently fit to retain his parental rights. No, such a parent, if he should lose contact with his child for a period of no greater than five months—during which time his own government prevents him from traveling to retake possession of the child—has the burden of justifying his parental claim if the child is cared for by distant relatives with whom "bonding" has begun. This is conservatism?

IRA SCHOCHET
New York, NY

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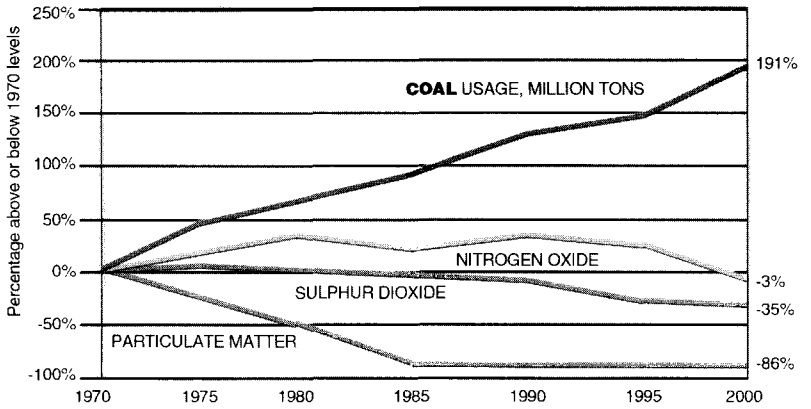

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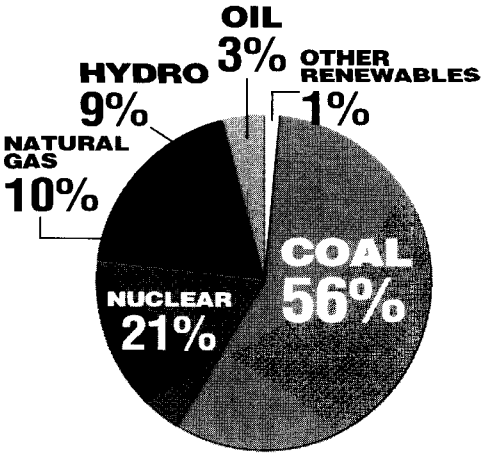

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the weekly Standard

The Bucks Stop Here

A couple of months ago, House majority whip Tom DeLay gave a powerful speech decrying the Clinton administration's appeasement of China, and making a strong case for a much tougher policy toward Beijing. Now, the same Tom DeLay is working night and day to help Clinton cement his "legacy" by passing permanent trade status for China. DeLay, of course, insists there is no contradiction. Borrowing the woolly-headed, utopian arguments usually deployed by Clinton and his national security adviser, Sandy Berger, DeLay claims trading with China will transform that brutal dictatorship into a model of democracy.

We have too high an opinion of the majority whip to think that he really believes this. Tom DeLay would not have suggested during the Cold War that granting the Soviet Union permanent most-favored-nation status was sound strategy. Like Ronald Reagan, most conservatives understood that enriching the Soviet government would only allow it to purchase more weapons. Is there any doubt today that China will use some of its increasing wealth to buy advanced weapons from cash-starved Russia and build up its nuclear and conventional forces?

When forced to pick between national security and making a buck, many Republicans are choosing to make a buck.

Nor does DeLay believe that trading with Cuba and Iraq is the best way to bring down Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein. Last week, as DeLay was twisting Republican arms to win PNTR for China, he argued against a proposal that would lift sanctions against the sale of agricultural and medical products to Cuba and other rogue states. Here's DeLay: "When I pick between support of freedom and making a buck, I'm going to pick freedom." But when it comes to China, many Republicans are choosing to make a buck.

Republican party strategists have made no secret of their hope that supporting PNTR will give them a leg up in their competition with the Democrats for corporate contributions, especially from the high-tech, insurance, and finance industries. They're salivating at the prospect that House Democrats will fail to rally around their president—it's ironic that Democrats are less eager to help Clinton than Republicans—and that they will be able to convince big business that only Republicans can be trusted to look after their wallets when it comes to China.

This may be good business, and perhaps it's good politics—although polls consistently show the public, and Republicans especially, less than enthusiastic about the trade deal with China. But it is incoherent national security policy. If China is the challenge to American interests that DeLay rightly claims it is, then how can it make sense to grant Beijing permanent and therefore irrevocable trading status? Would it not be wiser to adopt a more skeptical approach, to keep American options open, to take things one year at a time? Shouldn't Republicans at least insist on strengthening the defense relationship with our friends in Taiwan first? Shouldn't they insist on responsible behavior from Beijing on weapons proliferation and the like? Doesn't national security trump commerce?

Republicans who plan to vote for PNTR in their eagerness to court corporate donors should keep something in mind. At some point after they cast their vote—maybe it will be a matter of months, maybe a matter of days—China will do something offensive. Maybe the Beijing government will murder some more Falun Gong supporters; maybe it will massacre some labor protesters; maybe it will launch some more missiles in the direction of Taiwan.

Republicans with long memories may recall the contra aid debates of the 1980s. The Democratic party would defeat aid to the contras, and Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega would promptly head off to Moscow, causing embarrassment for those decent, if misguided, Democrats who had been taken in. In fact, there was no reason to be surprised by Ortega's going to Moscow: The Sandinistas were just being themselves. Well today, Republicans can count on the fact that the Chinese Communists will similarly be true to themselves. And then, decent, if misguided, Republicans will regret their credulity. Is the GOP now to become the party of trusting naiveté in foreign policy? Is it really worth the money?

—*William Kristol and Robert Kagan*

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Bush Rolls the Social Security Dice

He's the first presidential candidate in sixty years to touch the third rail. BY DAVID BROOKS

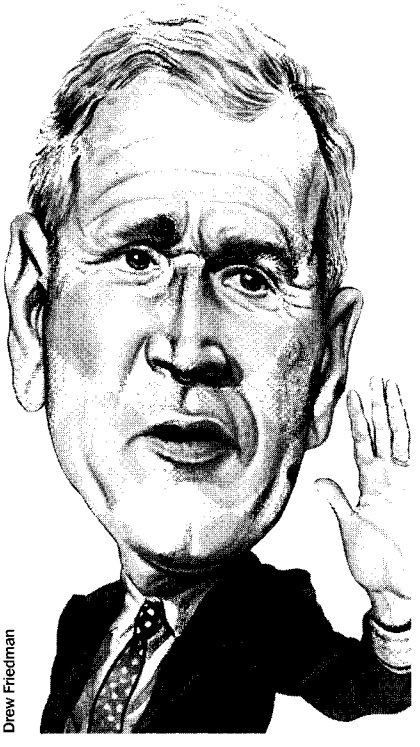
GEORGE BUSH has opened up a startling 8 point lead over Al Gore, according to the latest *Los Angeles Times* poll, and the conventional view is that he's built this post-primary advantage by moving to the center. But that's not quite right. Over the past month Bush has moved to the center and the right simultaneously. He could turn out to be the first conservative in the world to find a way to counter the mushy Third Way style of politics created by Bill Clinton and Tony Blair.

That Third Way style of politics vows to move beyond the "false choices" of left and right. But what the Third Wayers mostly do is propose a hodgepodge of modest programs some of which seem vaguely conservative and some of which seem vaguely liberal. They seem to offer the best of both worlds—free market prosperity with dirigiste compassion. Nobody can argue with this model's political success. Third Way types lead virtually every nation from here to Vladivostok.

The Bush campaign has learned the essential lesson of the Third Way—that we are no longer in an age when the central debate is between those who love government and those who hate it. These days unreconstructed liberals and unreconstructed conservatives do not win presidencies. Instead, the real debate is over how to mix limited government activism with fiscal conservatism. How do you concoct the stew?

David Brooks, a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is the author of* Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There *(Simon & Schuster).*

Over the past few weeks, the Bush campaign has not been shy about proposing an activist agenda. Bush has proposed a $3.6 billion program for new health care clinics, a $2 billion program to clean up brownfield sites, a $35 billion plan to help families purchase health insurance, a $5 billion plan to address illiteracy, a $1.7 billion plan to encourage developers to rehab housing, a $500 million grant plan to improve Latino health, and so on and so on. Some of the programs include federal grants. The total cost so far approaches $60 billion over five years.


Drew Friedman

That croaking sound you hear is the death of the flat tax. Based on the idea that government should get out of the way so people can make their own decisions about earning and spending, the flat tax is off the Republican radar screen. Bush's approach has caused some free marketeers to blanch. But most conservatives are going along giddily. "I think Bush is talking the way Republicans should have been talking for the last 40 years," leading conservative activist Grover Norquist told the *Times-Picayune* last month.

There are two reasons for conservative enthusiasm. First, it is working politically. Not only is Bush opening up a lead in the national polls, but his standing on specific issues like education and health care is way above that of other, less activist Republicans.

But more important, Bush's activism on these other domestic issues builds credibility for him when it comes to taking on a big-ticket item like Social Security. Nobody can accuse Bush of being dogmatically hostile to government, so he will not scare voters when he moves to reform a beloved entitlement like Social Security.

Bush has been slowly unveiling the outlines of what could be a historic reform of the Social Security system. He's not going to provide nitty-gritty details, but it'll be the standard reform model that conservatives, and many centrist Democrats, have been advocating for the past several years.

Democrats have always been able to demagogue this sort of reform package to death. And even today, it is extraordinarily hard to tell how this issue will play out in the fall. The polls are utterly confusing. If you ask people in theory whether individuals should be allowed to invest part of their retirement in private accounts, they overwhelmingly agree (by about 58 percent to 33 percent in a recent Princeton Survey Research poll, for example). But if you ask them about specific plans put forward by specific politicians, suddenly they—or at least the people who have the loudest voices on this issue—squawk. Both Bush and McCain backed off their reform goals during the primary season and

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fell back on the standard rhetoric: their desire to "preserve and protect" the system.

Republicans are perpetually hopeful that the electorate is moving in their direction. After all, the New Deal generation, which doesn't want Social Security changed, is dying off, while the investor class, which should be comfortable with individual accounts, is growing by leaps and bounds. And if there has ever been a time to be hopeful, it is now. That's because Bush has more credibility on this issue, in large part because of his activism on other issues.

As usual, Gore is all set to wave the bloody shirt. He's already charged that Bush has a "secret plan" to privatize the system. But what is striking is the way this issue is drawing Gore away from the center. He started as a Democratic Leadership Council Democrat. The DLC strongly favors Social Security reform. In fact, if you take the Bush domestic agenda, with the large exception of the tax cuts, it resembles the DLC blueprint—tax credits, targeted spending programs, entitlement reform. This resemblance has not been lost on DLC leaders.

But Gore has abandoned that model. If Bush stays aggressive on Social Security and other issues, Gore will attack, inevitably moving himself further and further away from the Third Way/DLC approach that has been winning elections for Democrats. That could produce another President Bush and a historic reform of Social Security. That in turn could have a cascade effect, further boosting future Republican fortunes. For as James Glassman and Kevin Hassett point out in their book, *Dow 36,000*, investors are more likely to vote Republican than non-investors. Even in the same income bracket, people with money in the financial markets are far more likely to vote Republican than people without.

That's why, for all the concern about education and health care and judges and China, the most important issue in this election is Social Security. ♦

A Handshake, Not a Hug

Without great enthusiasm, McCain throws his support to Bush. BY TUCKER CARLSON

Pittsburgh

THE FIRST CLUE that the Bush-McCain press conference will be more Bush than McCain comes at the front door, where a group of Bush staffers have set up an identification checkpoint. The 100 or so journalists who arrive are told to produce "credentials" before entering the ballroom of the William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh. Once the ID check is complete, the weapons detection process begins. A burly man with an earpiece and an electromagnetic wand gives each reporter a full-body frisk. With the perimeter secure, the event begins.

Bush and McCain arrive around 10:30. The two have just spent an hour and a half together in a suite upstairs talking. They are famous for disliking each other, but with a dozen television cameras in the room they pull off a fairly good imitation of friendliness. (For a straight talker, McCain can be impressively phony when he wants to be.) Bush thanks McCain for making him "a better candidate." McCain indicates that he likes Bush, too. Does this mean you endorse him for president? a reporter asks. "Yes," McCain says tersely.

The reporters throw out a few more questions. Suddenly a voice calls out from the back of the room. It's Karen Hughes, Bush's communications director. The press conference, she declares, has ended. A few moments later it does. Bush heads to the next campaign event. McCain leaves to catch a flight back to Washington. Neither says anything else.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The event had been billed in press accounts as a summit meeting, and in the end it turned out to be about as lively and surprising as a plenary session in Helsinki. But it came close to being a lot more exciting. Less than a week before he went to Pittsburgh, McCain was still planning to delay his endorsement of Bush. It's not clear what changed his mind, though Bush himself may have helped. The Sunday before the meeting, Bush called McCain at the senator's weekend house in Arizona. McCain's 14-year-old son Jack answered the phone, told Bush his father wasn't home, and asked him to call back later. Bush did, and the two had a short, pleasant conversation.

While his staff denies the call had anything to do with the apparent change of heart, McCain can be strongly influenced by personal gestures. (Bush aides, meanwhile, spun the call as more evidence of the governor's uniting, not dividing.) In any case, McCain at some point decided to throw his support to Bush. Then he told the press about it. At a book signing last Monday in a mall outside Pittsburgh, McCain was asked if he planned to endorse his former rival the next day. "Sure," McCain said.

Some in the Bush camp were irritated. The news, which made it onto the wires in about 20 minutes, drained the suspense—and therefore deflated the headlines—surrounding the summit. From Austin, it looked like simply another example of John McCain the impulsive bigmouth recklessly chattering with the media. Bush advisers spread the word that the news was not news, since an endorsement in Pittsburgh had been

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— David C. Stolinsky in our Dec. 1997 issue

The Sovietization of American Women

Fragments of the old "iron law of wages" still operate. Doubling the potential labor supply by adding women to it reduces real wages toward half of what they were when men constituted the labor pool. It now takes two workers — husband and wife — to earn what is needed to support a family in modest comfort, when it used to take only one. We have come full circle from where we used to look down censoriously on Russian women doing hard physical labor in mines, mills, and factories. A look at our assembly lines and road crews reveals how we've sovietized American women.

— Prof. Rupert J. Ederer in our May 1999 issue

Insulting Pregnant Ladies

Utter strangers strike up conversations, and when they find out that this is not the "blessed" first child, not the "acceptable" second, and not the "you-must-be-crazy" third, but the "irresponsible" fourth or fifth, the conversations can turn into inquisitions laced with stinging remarks. But would they consider giving a lecture on more "responsible" use of the earth's resources to a person buying a vacation home or shopping for a third car? In an age when sensitivity and diversity are said to be prized, one of the last acceptable prejudices is against parents with many children.

— Kathleen Whitney Barr in our April 1999 issue

The Best Sex Ed Is No Sex Ed

There was little sex education in the schools in the 1950s, but there was also little teenage pregnancy. Pregnancy rates rose as sex education increased.

— David C. Stolinsky in our Dec. 1997 issue

Not so long ago there was an effective Christian sex education program. In it children were taught in the home about Heaven and Hell. Heaven is a wonderful place and everyone should want to go there. Fornication might send one to Hell. The teaching was direct and simple and — judging by statistical levels of sexual misbehavior and consequent misery — was effective.

— Joseph Collison in our Jan. 1999 issue

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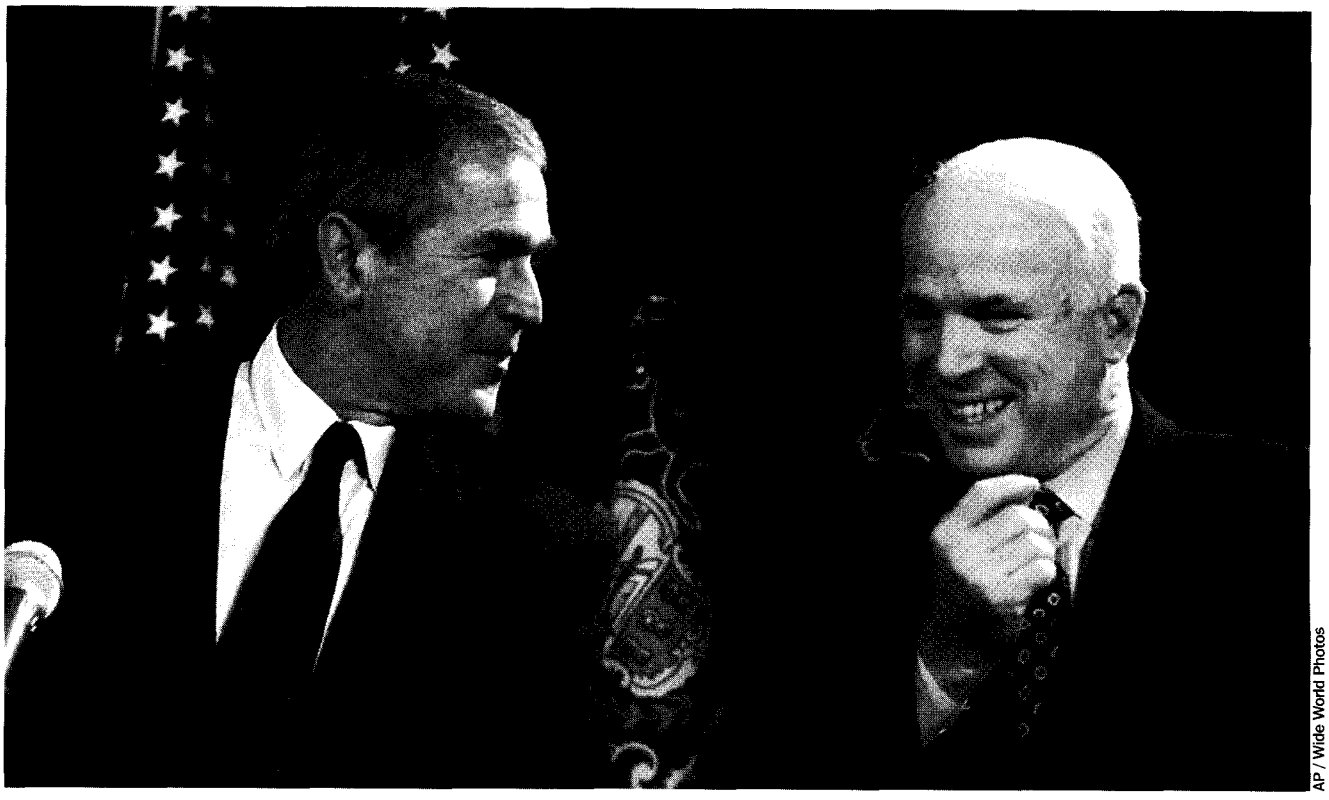

AP / Wide World Photos

Bush and McCain meet the press in Pittsburgh

planned all along. Someone told McCain what the Bush people were saying. McCain got mad. By 11:00 the night before the meeting, rumors were circulating that McCain was ready to change his mind once again.

McCain managed to choke back his irritation, and by the end of the meeting both he and Bush emerged with something. McCain didn't receive concessions on campaign finance reform (or anything else), but he did please some of his allies back in Washington who had been urging him to hurry up and endorse the party nominee. McCain is thinking about running for president again in 2004. If he does, it will be helpful to have demonstrated that he can get along with Republicans.

Bush got to pretend that he and McCain agree on more than they actually do. "It's very helpful to have John embrace reform," he said at one point, as if McCain had finally caught on to the Bush Reform Agenda. Bush also used McCain's presence to defend his Social Security plan, a favorite target of the Gore campaign. Investing Social Security funds in the stock market makes sense, Bush said. "John and I agree strongly in that area." None of this may convince voters, but at the very least McCain's endorsement might prevent Al Gore from invoking the Arizona senator's name every time he slams Bush.

The public portion of the summit went smoothly, but what did the two talk about upstairs for 90 minutes? Unfortunately for history, there were no observers present. (The Bush campaign's request that Karen Hughes be allowed to sit in was laughed off the table by McCain advisers.) At the press conference, both McCain and Bush refused to characterize their conversation. It's a private matter, they both said firmly.

An hour later, standing at the US Airways gate at the Pittsburgh airport, drinking his fifth cup of coffee of the day, McCain was a bit less tight-lipped. It was a friendly enough meeting, McCain recalled. Bush avoided topics that "might be contentious," and instead chatted about his father, Ronald Reagan, and "how it's important for a president to inspire America." He complimented Cindy McCain on her role in the campaign. He didn't say much about campaign finance reform, though McCain came away with new insight into Bush's feelings about fund-raising. "I don't think he likes it," McCain said earnestly. "I don't think he likes it at all."

Actually, Bush seems to like fund-raising just fine. He's good at it, for one thing. (Bush is never more charming and impressive than when he's circulating from table to table greeting donors.) He has never appeared ashamed of raising money. Last year, as his campaign set new fund-raising records, Bush bragged that the donations were a measure of his popularity. Bush's finance staff describe their candidate as cheerful and tireless, an extremely effective fund-raiser who rarely complains.

Where did McCain get the idea that Bush doesn't like fund-raising? Evidently, Bush told him so. In other words, Bush used his 90 minutes in Pittsburgh to spin his former rival—and perhaps successfully. George W. Bush may turn out to be a wilier candidate than anyone expected. ♦

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God and Woman at Tufts

A Christian student group is disbanded for being . . . Christian. BY JOHN J. DIIULIO JR.

THE TUFTS CHRISTIAN Fellowship is a student group at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. As orthodox Christians, its members hold certain party-pooping views. One is that sex is biblically sanctioned for married couples only: Premarital sex, adultery, and homosexual behavior are wrong. In ancient times (the 1940s and '50s), this view was held by most average citizens and even by many elite university folk.

But today? As the *Boston Globe* has reported, Tufts undergraduate Julie Catalano, a professing Christian and self-described bisexual, aspired to become the leader of the Tufts Christian Fellowship. Ms. Catalano's peers had welcomed a dialogue with her, but they would not agree to make her the leader of their group. In reply, she filed a sexual-orientation discrimination complaint. On April 13, a student council voted to de-fund and ban the TCF.

John J. DiIulio Jr. is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Orthodox Christians have denounced this decision as "liberal intolerance." But rather than simply vent, they should reaffirm their right to free association; then, in the spirit of the liberal arts, they should challenge the students and faculty at Tufts to consider the Christian understanding of sex and the Christian worldview generally. Something like this.

Accept it or not, the Bible is clear and categorical in depicting homosexual acts as wrong (see Genesis 19:1-29; Romans 1:24-27; I Corinthians 6:10; I Timothy 1:10). Thus, in the Roman Catholic tradition, homosexual acts are declared "intrinsically disordered" and acceptable "under no circumstance." But orthodox Christianity also laments the sin but loves the sinner. As the Catholic Catechism puts it, "The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. . . . They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."

Now then, is it "unjust discrimination" for orthodox Christians to refuse to be led by someone who rejects biblical teaching, as they understand it, on homosexuality? Of course not. And in principle, were the dispute over a heterosexual who flouted biblical writ by affirming his or her choice to sleep around, the case would be exactly the same.

The starting point for the biblical view of things, of course, is a single transcendent God, on whose providential purpose life depends. This view is profoundly at odds with the secular faith that prevails uncontested on most campuses these days and whose tenets include naturalism, relativism, and multiculturalism.

Naturalism is the belief that physical causes alone are sufficient to explain all that exists: Human life arose from a chance collision of atoms, and we humans are simply organic accidents cast up among the cosmic debris. Which is harder to believe, that human life has no transcendent purpose, or that it has one?

If nature and chance are all, then each of us is free to concoct his or her own morality through acts of will and expressions of preference limited only by our imaginations, which are generally more selfish than saint-

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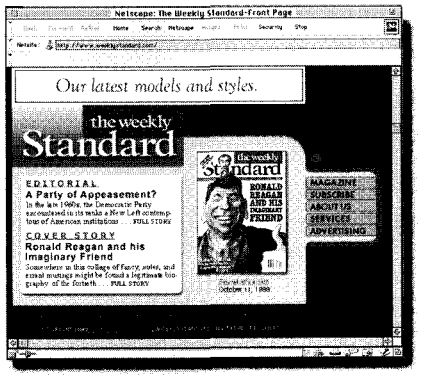

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ly. So our morality might be: If it feels good, do it. There are no rules. Live and let die. Do whatever—whatever, that is, except embrace the absolute assertions of old-time religion.

Orthodox Christians believe that certain standards of conduct are both right for all and known to all, written by God on every human heart. Nowhere, for example, is the acceptability of cannibalism considered a mere matter of taste; never is cold-blooded killing okay; never may one fail to aid the poor in one's midst; and many more moral absolutes besides. Righteous relativists object to this as "imposing one set of values."

Relativism begat multiculturalism, understood as the belief that one's ultimate identity as a human being resides in one's social class, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. By contrast, orthodox Christians believe that all human beings, regardless of class, color, dialect, anatomy, or libido, share a single ultimate identity and possess common personal rights and social duties as children of God.

Ah, but do they practice what they preach? Often not, and never perfectly; their worldview contains some notions about sin that address this. But it is also true that orthodox Christians supply more than their share of volunteer hours and income to charities. In particular, many urban churches, black and white, Latino and Asian, are led by orthodox believers who follow Christ's message by working daily among their neediest neighbors. And the beneficiaries of their work are mostly "unchurched" poor children, young people, and families. This is the authentic pluralism of believers.

So, is there room enough at higher education's finest inns for orthodox Christians like the Tufts Christian Fellowship? Is it even time to revisit how religious universities became secularized and to assess openly what's been gained and lost, intellectually and otherwise, in the bargain? Heavens, yes. ♦

Sock It Toomey

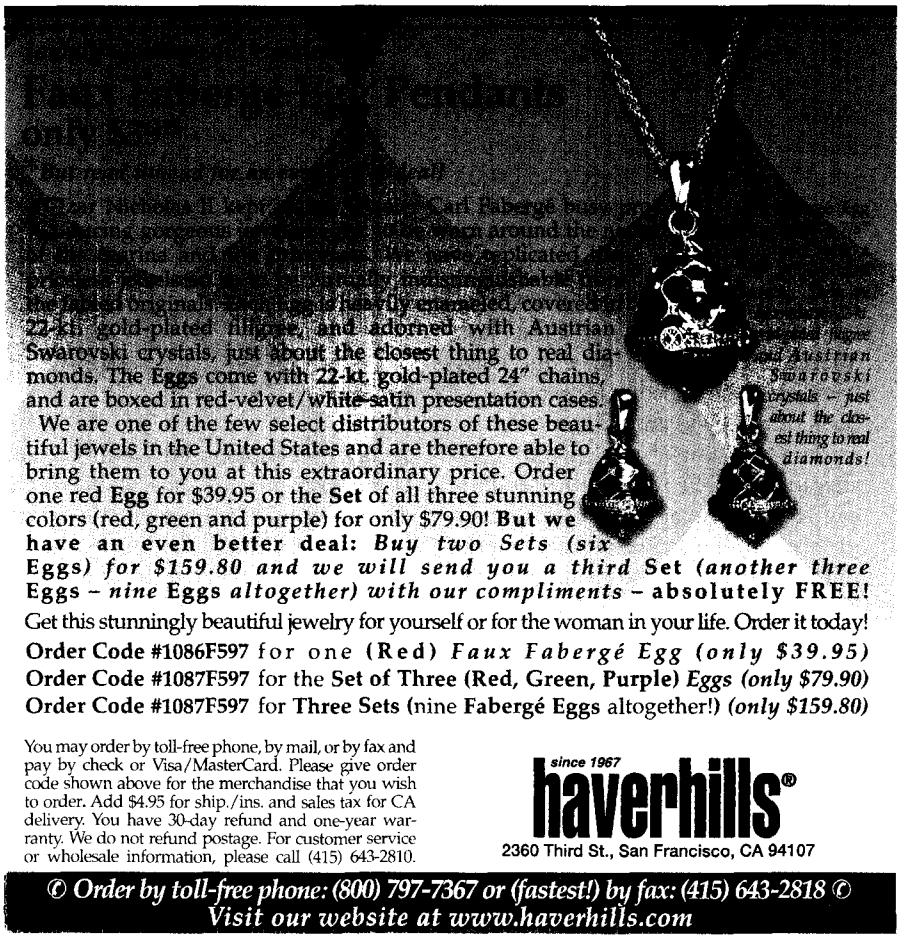
A GOP freshman from Pennsylvania fights for fiscal conservatism. BY EDMUND WALSH

IF ANYONE WAS EXPECTED to cause fits for the House Republican leadership, it wasn't Pat Toomey. A freshman congressman from Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, Toomey is as straight-laced as the coal-belt district he represents. An Eagle Scout who became an investment banker, Toomey now owns a chain of sports-themed restaurants. He's brought his clean-cut ways to the House, where he's one of the Republican party's most consistent voices for fiscal austerity. And in the age of surplus politics, that's the guy who causes trouble.

Edmund Walsh is a staff assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

His conservative credentials made Toomey a party darling when he ran for retiring Democrat Paul McHale's seat in 1998. A constellation of Republican stars appeared in the district on his behalf. Bob Dole, Rudy Giuliani, Jack Kemp, Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay, Jennifer Dunn . . . the list of big names goes on, each one stumping for Toomey or headlining a fund-raiser. The National Republican Congressional Committee also pitched in with cash and advertising.

When the 106th Congress opened, the freshman Toomey was given what would be a plum assignment for almost any member, a seat on the Budget Committee. It's from this



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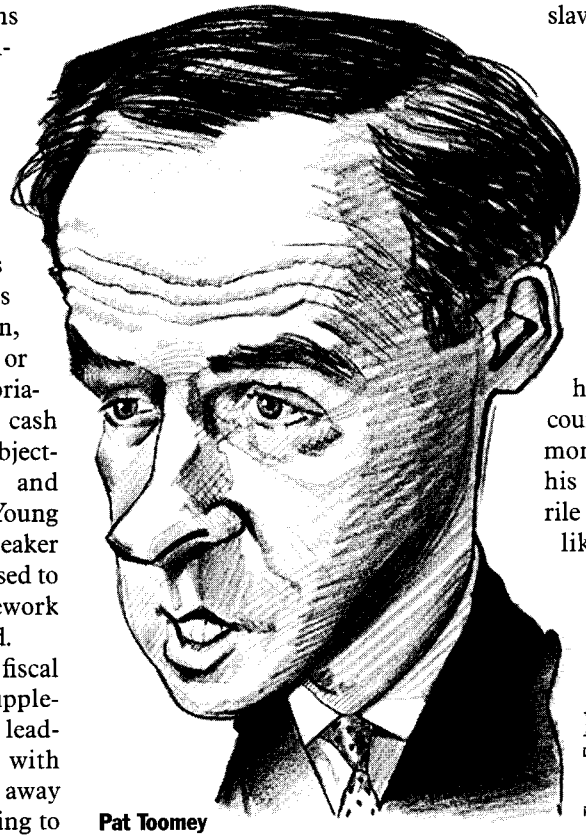
perch that he began to ruffle the feathers of House veterans. In late March of this year, he refused to yield ground to Republican spenders on a supplemental appropriations bill that would have dipped into the non-Social Security surplus for fiscal year 2000. President Clinton had requested roughly $5 billion to fight the drug trade in Colombia, reimburse the Pentagon for expenses incurred in Kosovo, and help victims of Hurricane Floyd. By the time the bill made it through the appropriations process, however, it totaled $9 billion.

In response, Toomey used his seat on the Budget Committee to stop the bloated bill in its tracks. He attached language to the 2001 budget framework that would have prevented Congress from spending the 2000 surplus on anything but debt reduction, tax cuts, Social Security reform, or Medicare reform. House appropriators, who thrive on doling out cash for various projects, naturally objected. Appropriations chairman and thirty-year veteran C.W. (Bill) Young dashed off a blustery letter to speaker Dennis Hastert in which he refused to support the 2001 budget framework with Toomey's language attached.

To win back the support of fiscal conservatives and get their supplemental bill passed, Republican leaders were forced to negotiate with Toomey. The leadership came away with what they needed by agreeing to back Toomey's amendment to set aside $4 billion of the current 2000 surplus for debt reduction. Republican leaders also agreed to let Toomey propose similar set-aside amendments to any future efforts to spend the 2000 surplus.

Following the unanimous passage of his amendment, Toomey expressed satisfaction. While $4 billion is a drop in the budget bucket, he explains, "if we had done much more than that people who wanted to spend it would have risen up" to defeat the measure. As it was, the effort represented "the first time in the history of the modern Congress that . . . an explicit appropriation for debt reduction" passed the House. Plus, since every dollar Congress spends today is used to set spending levels in future years, any money that stays off the books now will mean more savings down the road.

Toomey understands he can't get everything he wants. He says he'd "prefer to see more of [the budget surplus] go to tax cuts," but it's a "no-brainer" to retire debt rather than spend more money. This ability to see the bigger picture has won over a diverse group of supporters, including the Concord Coalition, Americans for Tax Reform, and Citizens for a Sound Economy.


Thomas Fluharty

Pat Toomey

Asked if the veteran Republicans he confronted will hold a grudge, he says, "I think the effort is actually welcomed by leadership." "They need to have a strong voice within the rank and file," he insists, to hold the line on spending. Toomey even preaches restraint to his constituents and, he claims, gets his message across "all the time." The key, he argues, is to emphasize inefficiency and waste in federal agencies and departments that already have plenty of money.

When it came to a congressional pay raise last summer, Toomey voted against the salary hike and then, after it passed, contributed the difference in his own paycheck to the federal treasury. And he tried to force austerity measures on the White House with a provision mandating that the administration seek reimbursement for defense expenditures in Yugoslavia.

Toomey thinks Republicans could maintain their majority if they'd stick to a consistent message of reducing debt, cutting taxes, and fighting government waste. Doing so, however, hasn't saved him from what may turn out to be a very strong challenge from a Democratic union official who's pulled in impressive contributions from a host of labor interests. Toomey counters that he's already raised more money than has ever been raised in his district. And as much as he may rile the Republican leadership, they'd like to keep him around. Speaker Hastert and majority whip Tom DeLay have both hosted fundraisers in his district over the past six months.

If Toomey does come back as a member of the majority party in 2001, he'll still have to hustle to advance his anti-tax, fiscal responsibility agenda. He has term-limited himself to six years, like another conservative stalwart, Tom Coburn. (Toomey thinks it "flattering, but premature" to suggest that he would replace the retiring Coburn as the House's leading fiscal conservative.)

While he points out that his term-limits pledge provides "independence from interest groups and the leadership of my own party," Toomey also recognizes, "there's a fire burning under me." He must get things done while he can. If Toomey's record in the House after just 14 months is any indication, he's unlikely to cool down any time soon. ♦

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Nickel-and-Dimed to Death

Price controls for prescription drugs are a prescription for disaster. BY ROBERT M. GOLDBERG

BY URGING PRICE CONTROLS on prescription drugs, killing Medicare reform, and then proposing a universal drug benefit for senior citizens, congressional Democrats and the Clinton administration have launched a war against drug companies that they hope will help them regain control of Congress and retain the White House in 2000.

Republicans at first sat in silence hoping the issue would simply go away. But the high price of prescription drugs is now the hot button issue of American politics, and the GOP is on the defensive. House Republicans as a result have unveiled their own prescription drug benefit for seniors, one that would subsidize private insurance for lower income and chronically ill individuals. Insurance companies are hostile to this measure, though, so the only GOP alternative on the table is senator Slade Gorton's, which is even more radical than the Democrats': Force drug companies to sell products in America at the lowest price found in either Canada or Mexico.

Gorton is in a tough reelection fight in Washington, where the issue of drug prices is especially controversial because of his state's proximity to the cheap prescription drugs doled out by Canada's price-fixing national health bureaucracy. So his political position is understandable. But he and other recent converts to the price-control crusade who would spread the practice of government-regulated drug pricing would also spread the virus of rationing that threatens medical progress as we know it. Kill the market for a product by limiting access and you kill the incentive and rationale for research.

Robert M. Goldberg is a senior research fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

And less access to advanced medicines, not lower prices, is where we will end up if we emulate the policies of Canada and England that congressional price fixers and the Clinton administration so admire. Consumption, driven in part by the creation of health care entitlements and in part by better drugs and better medical practice, is what mainly drives drug costs up. And governments that try to control these costs end up denying people, usually the sickest and the oldest, access to the drugs that are most innovative and effective, on the grounds that these new treatments are "too expensive."

In Great Britain last October, the National Health Service refused to pay for the new flu treatment Relenza. In order to control health care costs, the government health czars have set up a board called the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (known, chillingly, as NICE) to decide whether to pay for new technologies as they emerge. It decided Relenza, which costs about $40 for a course of treatment, wasn't worth paying for and took the added step of discouraging doctors from prescribing it for patients who might have wanted to pay for it out of their own pocket. There were plenty of data that Relenza helped people who could be really rocked by the flu, but NICE argued that it needed more evidence—the ultimate bureaucratic dodge.

The NICE board advised getting more people immunized, which is ironic: In a country where flu shots are provided free, only 40 percent of the public gets them on a regular basis. In any event, flu shots work about 70 percent of the time and are useless against new strains of influenza, which can be deadly for people with compromised immune systems. In the end, during Britain's flu epidemic this winter, hundreds of elderly people died and thousands of people with asthma, lung problems, or heart conditions waited for hours, even days, for relief, gasping on trolleys in overcrowded health care facilities. When the morgues were overwhelmed by the dead, the National Health Service had to rent refrigerated trucks, the kind used for hauling meat, for temporary storage. We can't know how much this toll might have been lowered by a $40 drug, but it's the sort of question price-controllers should be forced to confront.

Similarly, many of the drugs that Hillary Clinton says Americans should be allowed to re-import from Canada so as to save money are in fact not made available to that country's seniors under Canada's prescription drug plan. Thousands of Ontario seniors are being denied new treatments available in this country for osteoporosis, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's disease. Indeed, a spokesperson for health minister Elizabeth Witmer has admitted that many of the drugs being kept off the formulary "have long-term benefits both for our budget and for patients."

Even when new drugs are made available under government ration schemes, people have to wait for them to be doled out by bureaucrats or the private firms who are paid to make the decision for the government. On average it takes three years for most European countries to set a price and begin paying for a product once it is available in America. In Canada, it can take up to two years after a drug has been approved in the United States. The determination for the use of a drug is made by a review panel or a utilization review company, which may allow the use of a new drug for only a limited period of time. Studies by health care researcher Susan Horn

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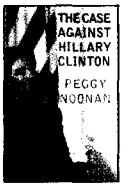

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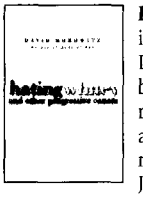

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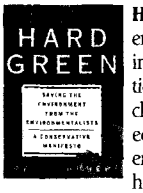

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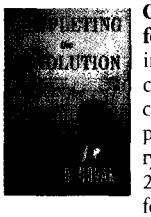

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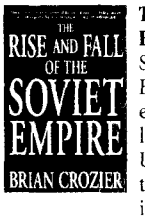

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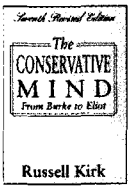

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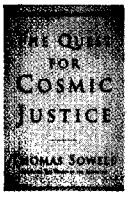

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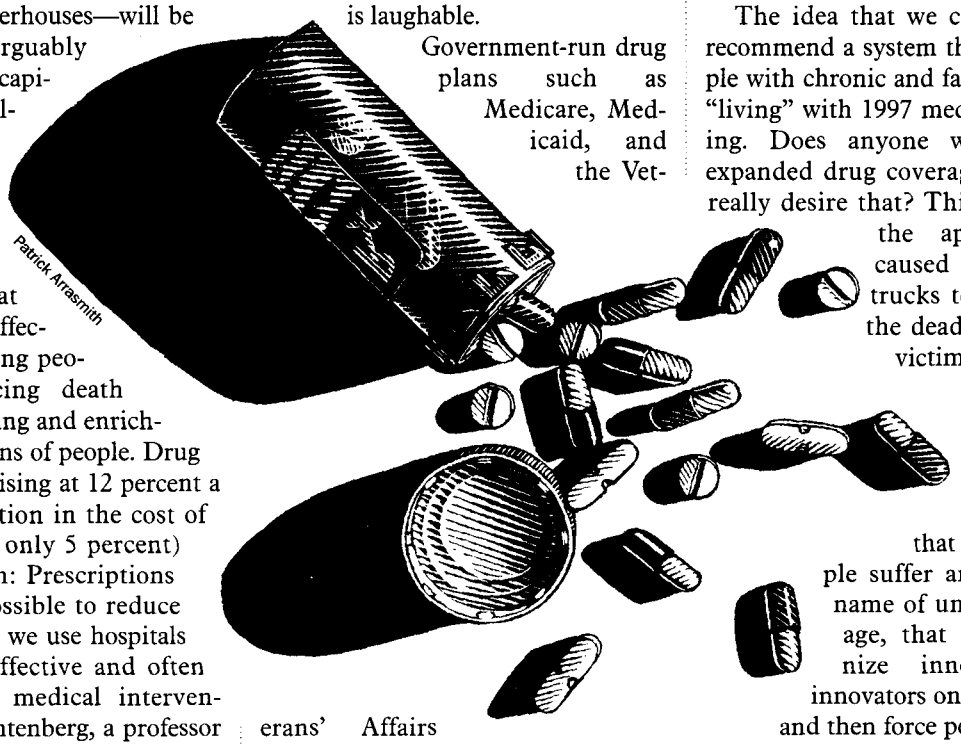
have found that such restrictions can actually drive up the use of more expensive hospital and emergency room care—because patients are sicker.

Finally of course, if you stop paying for new drugs, you discourage investment in innovation. No surprise then that Canadian drug firms produce few new medicines worth marketing worldwide. Price controls mean that Canadians, like other beneficiaries of government health care around the world, actually sponge off of American research. It is equally unsurprising that the operational headquarters of the new GlaxoSmithkline company—two formerly British drug powerhouses—will be in New Jersey, arguably now the world's capital for drug development.

Ultimately, it is not just the price of prescription drugs that is at issue. It is their effectiveness in keeping people well, reducing death rates, and extending and enriching life for millions of people. Drug costs have been rising at 12 percent a year (while inflation in the cost of other services is only 5 percent) for a good reason: Prescriptions are making it possible to reduce the rate at which we use hospitals and other less effective and often more expensive medical interventions. Frank Lichtenberg, a professor at Columbia University Business School, estimates that a one-time pharmaceutical research and development investment of $15 billion saves 1.6 million life-years annually (which is worth about $27 billion in economic productivity) and reduces spending on doctors and hospitals.

Such new technologies undermine the great moral claim of all government health care systems: that universal coverage, economic redistribution, and heavy government subsidies to insure access are the key to better health. To the contrary: Medical progress and the welfare state are natural antagonists.

The Clinton Medicare prescription drug benefit proposal would give the government control of about 60 percent of the pharmaceutical market. As the largest purchaser of care for the most frequent consumers of pharmaceuticals (the elderly), Medicare would treat drugs as simply another entitlement, the sum total of which is more important than the quality or medical value of any of its parts. The idea that a Medicare drug benefit would always offer, in the words of one Medicare official, "drugs that were found to be reasonable and necessary by [a patient's] own physician" is laughable.


Patrick Arrasmith

Government-run drug plans such as Medicare, Medicaid, and the Veterans' Affairs system already limit new drugs to contain costs. These programs deny and restrict access to new drugs for treating cancer, schizophrenia, high cholesterol, and ulcers that have been proven more effective and provide a better quality of life. The Clinton drug plan will apply the same template as all drug price-control plans, inevitably resorting to outright restriction of medical innovations through mandatory generic drug switching, restricted formularies, prior authorization from drug benefit managers for new drug use, and limits on prescription refills. There is no other way to handle medical progress, once you have defined its introduction as a threat to the system.

Indeed, proponents of the Clinton drug plan make no bones about denying people access to the mighty river of medical innovation to achieve their goal of a Medicare prescription drug benefit. Robert Reischauer, president of the Urban Institute, has said, "If you could tell me that we would provide coverage to 34 million [uninsured people], but the price of that [would be that] we would in 1999 have to live with 1997 medicine, I would say, fine, as long as the 1997 medicine continued each year."

The idea that we could serenely recommend a system that limits people with chronic and fatal illnesses to "living" with 1997 medicine is chilling. Does anyone who supports expanded drug coverage for seniors really desire that? This, after all, is the approach that caused the meat trucks to fill up with the dead bodies of flu victims in England.

Such a statement suggests that support is growing for a system that would let people suffer and die in the name of universal coverage, that would demonize innovation and innovators on the one hand, and then force people to accept increasingly outdated medicine on the other. It's not just Hillary Clinton anymore who has her ideological heels dug in on this issue, but more and more of her party and an increasing number of Republicans, too. And make no mistake, waging a war against medical progress has already claimed real casualties and will claim more. The drug-price ideologues do not care to see the connection. Sadly, too many of the politicians who know better would rather pander to seniors than speak out. Too bad there's not a pill for that. ♦

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Yankee Doodle and Dixie

After Appomattox and General Lee's surrender, it's an historical fact that Mr. Lincoln stepped outside the White House to hear a band play "Dixie." The band stopped in deference to Mr. Lincoln.

"No, no," he insisted. "Let's hear it. It's a rousing tune." Or words to that effect.

The Confederate flag flies over the South Carolina State House. It offends many. It pleases many. What to do?

But right here, this story becomes my dream. I'm standing near to Mr. Lincoln. "What do you think about the Confederate flag flying over the South Carolina Statehouse, Mr. Lincoln?" I asked.

"This is just part of a dream, right?" he responded. "Off the record as it were, right?"

"Yes, sir."

"The flag flies. The melody lingers on. That's the Confederate flag and the anthem, Dixie. Cut out the one. Someone will try to cut out the other. It's a given. What have you done? You're made of the South, a martyr," thought Abraham Lincoln.

"Go on please, Sir."

"O.K., so it's the real world again just for what follows," continued President Lincoln. "I told my people don't put Jefferson Davis in jail. Don't put him in irons. At first, Andrew Johnson's people did. Jeff Davis was a martyr. Then, they let him run free to talk anytime, anywhere. Davis became a loser and a bore. The South ignored him."

"So?"

"Now, as to the Confederate flag. Remember this is dream stuff," Mr. Lincoln went on. "Haul down that rebel flag flying over the South Carolina Statehouse. On the reverse side of it attach the Yankee flag, the flag of the U.S.A. On one side, the Confederate, the prodigal. On the other, the parent Uncle Sam, the U.S.A. My name is Lincoln, not Solomon."

"You're both, Sir. You're Mr. Lincoln. You're Solomon, two men of wisdom."

"To me, the idea is brotherly. Give a little. Get a lot. One flag, two sides. Both content," Mr. Lincoln said.

"It's so right, Mr. Lincoln," I told him. "Anyone will find it difficult to find anything wrong with it."

"The wind blows. The Confederate side of the flag faces north. The wind still blows. The Yankee side faces south. That's America. One flag, two people. Two people, one flag," Mr. Lincoln concluded.

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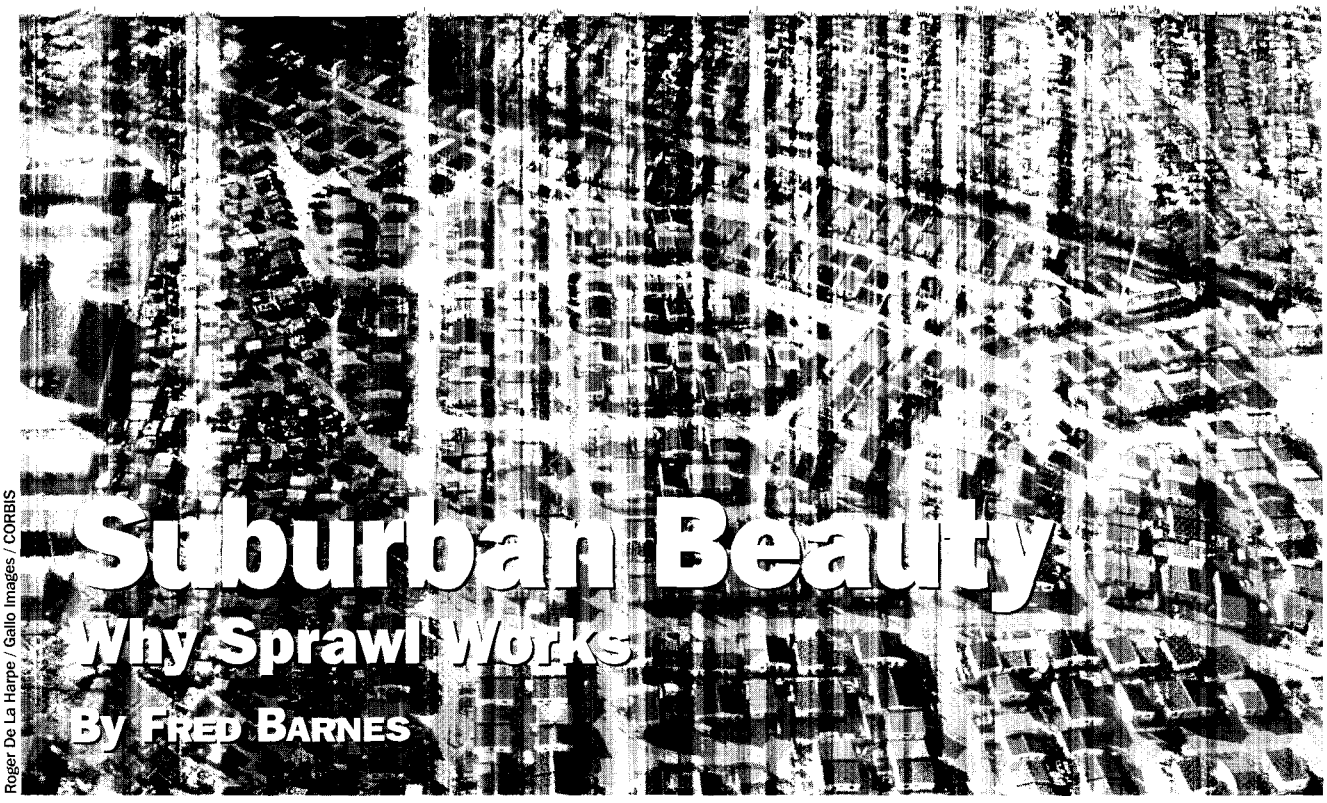

Roger De La Harpe / Gallo Images / CORBIS

Suburban Beauty

Why Sprawl Works

By Fred Barnes

The Old Town section of Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., is about as close to utopia as it gets for devotees of traditional communities and critics of suburban sprawl. It's a lovely example of "mixed use" zoning—shops, offices, homes are interspersed—and a monument to late eighteenth-century American architecture. Its streets are tree-lined and narrow, forcing cars to move slowly. The buildings are low-rise and close to the street. It's both pedestrian-friendly and accessible to mass transit. Old Town Alexandria is "a unique place to visit to engage in civilized activity," insist Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, three widely respected urban planners whose new book, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, is the most coherent and important attack on American sprawl to appear so far.

And yet there's a problem. When I moved a half dozen years ago to an Alexandria neighborhood not far from Old Town, my neighbors turned out to be immigrants—from Old Town. The family on one side has four kids and wanted a bigger house and a yard large enough for football and lacrosse games. Old Town was too cramped. The family of four on the other side also needed more room and the father was eager to landscape his back and front yards with dogwoods and azaleas and cherry trees. He couldn't plant a big garden in Old Town.

Suburban Nation
The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream
by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck
North Point, 289 pp., $30

Picture Windows
How the Suburbs Happened
by Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen
Basic, 298 pp., $27.50

So what kind of neighborhood did they move to? One with many of the distinguishing characteristics of suburban sprawl: a cul-de-sac, single-use zoning, McMansions, decks behind the houses and no front porches, two-car garages and four-car families, five minutes from a mall and nearer to an interstate highway than to mass transit.

These refugees from Old Town were followed by two more families I know. One lived on the edge of Old Town adjacent to a swath of public housing. They were tired of worrying about the crack dealer who arranged his business deals on the pay phone across the street. And they wanted a spacious house with a yard. The other family had always wanted to live in Old Town. So when their kids grew up and left home, they moved to a townhouse there. They didn't stay long. Old Town was too noisy and parking spaces were too few. They moved to a quieter, lower-density neighborhood miles farther from Washington. They have no trouble parking their two cars now.

All this is merely anecdotal evidence, but it's consistent with an irrefutable fact of American life. For all the scorn that's heaped on the suburbs—and especially on subdivisions of nearly identical houses on the fringe of metropolitan areas—people like living there. And not just middle-class drones either. My friends who left Old Town are upper-middle class, highly educated, and reasonably well-to-do. Like millions of others, they prefer a big house with a yard and plenty of room, plus a place to park their fleet of cars. Old-fashioned towns crammed with stores and homes and apartments or new imitations of them like Seaside, Florida (the town in the movie *The Truman Show*) have enormous curb appeal, but they're too crowded and expensive for most people. They just aren't where most Americans want to live. And nei-

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ther are dense city neighborhoods, even ritzy ones like Georgetown in Washington.

This is hard for those with an urban sensibility or a bias for college towns to believe, given their aversion to suburban America. Much of suburbia, after all, is grotesquely ugly, with ubiquitous strip malls and streets lined with fast-food joints. As often as not, neighborhoods in the inner ring of suburbs are decaying. In the exurbs, many homes are newer, but poorly designed and cheaply built. Then there's the traffic congestion that lengthens daily commutes. It's unavoidable because suburbanites are hopelessly car dependent. Yet the truth is they're mostly contented. They've come face to face with sprawl and they like it. And who can blame them?

Gary Braasch / CORBIS

A bevy of people, it turns out, from the heavyweight authors of *Suburban Nation* to Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, two professors from the State University of New York, whose *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* is a much more lightweight entry in the sprawl wars. Planners don't like suburban communities because much of the planning is done by real estate developers. Intellectuals have always looked askance at a suburban lifestyle they believe to be culturally barren: I can't think of a single novel or play that treats the suburbs kindly. Transportation specialists resent the refusal of suburbanites to abandon their cars and use mass transit. Environmentalists are mad at them for gobbling up open space. Liberals look down on them because the farther one gets from the city center, the more likely residents are to be conservatives. And Hollywood thinks suburbia is crass and soulless. Thus, the Oscar-winning movie of 1999, *American Beauty*, depicted every suburbanite as repellant for one reason or another.

The loathing of the suburbs has now morphed into a potent political movement that ostensibly targets sprawl as a specific type of suburban development, but is actually aimed at suburbia itself. *Suburban Nation* is likely to become this movement's bible. One of its authors, Andres Duany, is already the intellectual leader of the anti-sprawl cause. He's a Miami architect and the creator, along with his co-author, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, of Seaside, Florida, and Kentlands, Maryland, and other eye-catching "new urbanist" towns. More than anyone else, Duany has made "sprawl" a buzzword and a growing issue in community after community. Videotapes of Duany's lecture and slide show on sprawl have been circulating like *samizdat* for several years, and the power of his argument against the current state of America's suburbs has been fully captured in *Suburban Nation*.

The case is flawed, but not easily dismissed. "The dominant characteristic of sprawl," Duany and his co-authors write, "is that each component [of a community] is strictly segregated." Housing, shopping centers, office parks, and civic institutions are physically separated, causing the residents of suburbia to "spend an unprecedented amount of time and money moving from one place to the next." And since nearly everyone drives alone, "even a sparsely populated area can generate the traffic of a much larger traditional town." As bad as the congestion is, life is worse for those who don't drive. Kids, the poor, and the elderly are isolated. Teenagers become bored and sometimes violent. Old people "know the minute they lose their license, they will revert from adulthood to infancy and be warehoused in an institution where their only source of freedom is the van that takes them to the mall on Monday and Thursday afternoons." And what jobs sprawl does provide, the poor can't get to.

What strengthens the case against sprawl by Duany and company is that it has a conservative ring to it. They propose to replace sprawl with communities designed and built "in the traditional manner of the country's most successful older neighborhoods." Their models are the cheerful suburbs that sprouted up in the first third of the twentieth century. All the elements of community life were integrated. Stores and offices were nearby and people walked to work and to shop, or they rode trains or trolleys. Their lives weren't dominated by their automobiles. They weren't trapped in traffic congestion for hours every day and had more time for family life. Streets were designed to make neighborhoods peaceful, not to rush cars through as fast as possible. The suburban communities were more densely populated and closer to downtown. There were few highways, not many cars, no exurbs, and no sprawl. People sat on their front porches. They rode bicycles.

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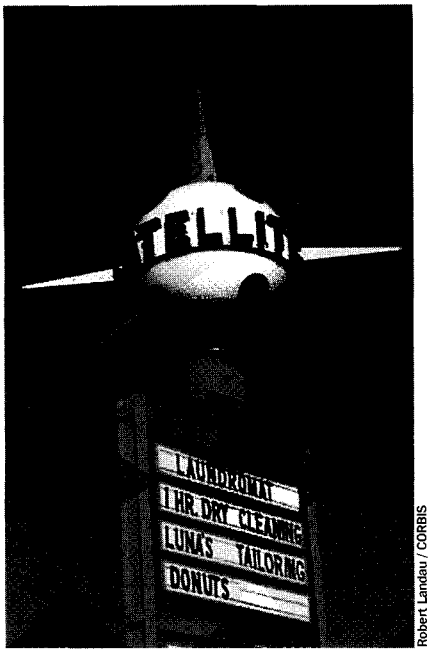

Robert Landau / CORBIS

This is a pleasant vision and perhaps appropriate for a country of a hundred million people. But it's utterly impractical for a postindustrial nation with 270 million people. Two-thirds of American families own their own homes, a phenomenal achievement. Without suburbs that extend far into the countryside, there would be millions fewer homeowners.

The authors raise the familiar cry about the lack of affordable housing. But where is housing least affordable? In fancy suburbs like Old Town Alexandria, Seaside, and Kentlands—the places extolled by Duany as models for the modern implementation of his old-fashioned vision. Housing is far less expensive the farther you get from a city. In other words, the more sprawl, the more affordable housing. The homes may look alike and be miles from offices or stores, but average working families can afford them.

The authors of *Suburban Nation* are candid enough to concede that not all suburban sprawl is bad. "In truth, a lot of sprawl—primarily affluent areas—could be considered beautiful." Even a McMansion—an enormous house that's bigger than the authors think it ought to be—"provides excellent value for its price." Inside, American houses are roomy and functional, but outside, "our public realm is brutal."

Cars and highways are the chief culprits. But as much as Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck hate the automobile, they admit they've yet to give up their own cars. They have an alibi or at least an explanation: "The problem with cars is not the cars themselves but that they have produced an environment of dependence."

Of course, people always depend on some form of transportation to get where they want to go. In the compact, close-in suburbs that critics of sprawl propose to build, folks would be dependent on their feet or bikes or trolleys. For most people, however, driving a car makes more sense. It gives them freedom and mobility and saves time that would be lost if they used mass transit. *Suburban Nation* admits as much. The book's opposition to the automobile is largely aesthetic and sociological. The plethora of parking lots outside suburban shopping centers irritates the authors. "Such excess is inevitable," they write. No parking space, no peace: "Anyone who has shopped in suburbia knows that the inability to find a parking space makes the entire proposition unworkable." A car is an isolation chamber: "a potentially sociopathic device." And it's never the answer to any problem.

"The only long term solutions to traffic are public transit and coordinated land use," Duany and his co-authors assert. They promote the idea of "induced traffic." Building more highways will cause more traffic congestion, not less. This is nonsense. As Steven Hayward of the Pacific Research Institute has pointed out, long lines at a grocery store would not prompt anyone to say, "Well, we can't build more grocery stores. That would only bring out more customers." Building more highways wouldn't lure more cars. The cars come anyway. What foes of sprawl won't accept is the inescapable fact that most Americans would rather suffer in daily traffic jams than use mass transit. Trains, trolleys, and light rail aren't a viable option.

Suburban Nation argues that the preference for cars didn't come about naturally. The authors repeat the canard that the auto industry bought up streetcar companies across the country and tore up the tracks in a conspiracy to promote the use of cars. To a large degree, they claim, "the atomization of our society into suburban clusters was the result of specific government and industry policies rather than some popular mandate." Government-guaranteed loans at low interest paid for suburban homes. The federal interstate highway system provided roads. But these programs were not imposed on reluctant Americans. Next to Medicare, they're the most popular government programs ever.

It's the anti-sprawl movement that wants to force a lifestyle and a housing pattern on unwilling Americans. For activists like Duany, democracy is often an impediment. Listen to this complaint in *Suburban Nation*:

> It is painful but necessary to acknowledge that the public process does not guarantee the best results. In fact, on certain issues, such as transit, population density, affordable housing, and facilities for special-needs populations, the public process seems to produce the *wrong* results. Acting selfishly, neighbors will typically reject a LULU (locally undesirable land use) even if its proposed location has been determined based on regional, social, or even ethical considerations.

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What should officials do in such cases? Go forward anyway, the authors suggest, because they know what's best: "Decision-makers must rely on something above and beyond process, something that may be called *principles*. Affordable housing must be fairly distributed. Homeless shelters must be provided in accessible locations. Transit must be allowed through. The environment must be protected." The authors express the hope that *Suburban Nation* "will provide a foundation upon which to make difficult decisions on behalf of the public good." With or without public support.

Picture Windows doesn't add much to the sprawl debate. The authors are professors who've heard from students that the Long Island suburbs aren't that bad a place. They agree, but only because those suburbs aren't like suburbs anymore. Gays and lesbians and immigrants live there. Women who've wised up and become feminists live there. Lots of unhappy people who've gotten a raw deal in life live there. The biggest problems are too many gated communities and not enough government-built housing and rental units. To its credit, however, *Picture Windows* does catalogue the "anti-suburban snobbery" of America's intelligentsia.

That snobbery is shared even by those who live in the planned communities and affluent, mixed-use inner suburbs beloved by the authors of *Suburban Nation*. Return to Old Town Alexandria for a moment. A favorite solution of anti-sprawl activists is something called "in-fill," which involves developing vacant spaces in cities and inner suburbs. Well, Alexandria has a large vacant area on the outskirts of Old Town where the federal government wants to build a headquarters for the Patent Office and seven thousand of its employees. A subway stop is nearby, and so is a train station. But residents of Old Town aren't pleased with this opportunity to fight the spread of suburbia with in-fill. They'd like the Patent Office to be built elsewhere, somewhere far over the horizon in the outer reaches of suburbia. Somewhere in the land of sprawl. ♦

Reagan's Ray Gun

How the Cold War was won.

BY GARY SCHMITT

Frances Fitzgerald's thesis is not subtle. The title of her book, *Way Out There in the Blue*, is taken from Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*: "He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine." This account of the birth of the Strategic Defense Initiative and its role in bringing down the Soviet Empire makes Ronald Reagan out to be the Willy Loman of the Cold War. He was a salesman-politician without peer, capable of peddling to the nation the Strategic Defense Initiative, a defense program that had more to do with "phantoms and mirages" than actual technology, and purporting to address the Soviet nuclear threat, which was more "hyperbole" than strategic reality.

Way Out There in the Blue
Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War
by Frances Fitzgerald
Simon & Schuster, 592 pp., $30

Moreover, the scam continues today, with conservatives who persist in selling the American public the idea that pressure generated by Reagan's military build-up and his decision to proceed with Star Wars forced the Soviets to cry uncle and end the Cold War. These same conservatives continue to push for ballistic missile defenses in spite of the fact that, after tens of billions of dollars spent on research and development, there is "still no capable interceptor on the horizon."

Fitzgerald's portrayal of Ronald Reagan is a familiar liberal caricature: He was a detached and rather insubstantial actor who, even as president, "lived in a world of rhetoric, performance and perceptions." Henry Kissinger notes, "It's very unusual to have a president who is not interested in policy at all." But Fitzgerald also describes Reagan as having a unique capacity for tapping into a strain of American populism which, at its best, helped revive our self-confidence after the disastrous 1970s and which, at its worst, led to policies that promised too much and left all prudence behind. The latter was certainly the case, she argues, when Reagan proposed SDI in 1983.

Here was a program born of political necessity. The Reagan administration had set about putting U.S.-Soviet relations on a different footing. The keys to doing so were rebuilding the military and strengthening the economy, renewing confidence here and abroad, and putting arms control on the back burner until those things had been accomplished. But this strategy was soon put in jeopardy by the unexpected recession, skyrocketing deficits, a nuclear freeze movement at home, mass protests in Western Europe over the deployment of new U.S. missiles, and Catholic bishops challenging the morality of nuclear deterrence itself.

Reagan's "genius" here was not to play the lines given him. Drawing on movie scripts from his past, Fitzgerald suggests, Reagan offered Americans the dream of a defensive system which would provide an invincible shield against missile attacks. With SDI, he radically changed the nature of the nuclear debate and cut the legs out from under the freeze movement.

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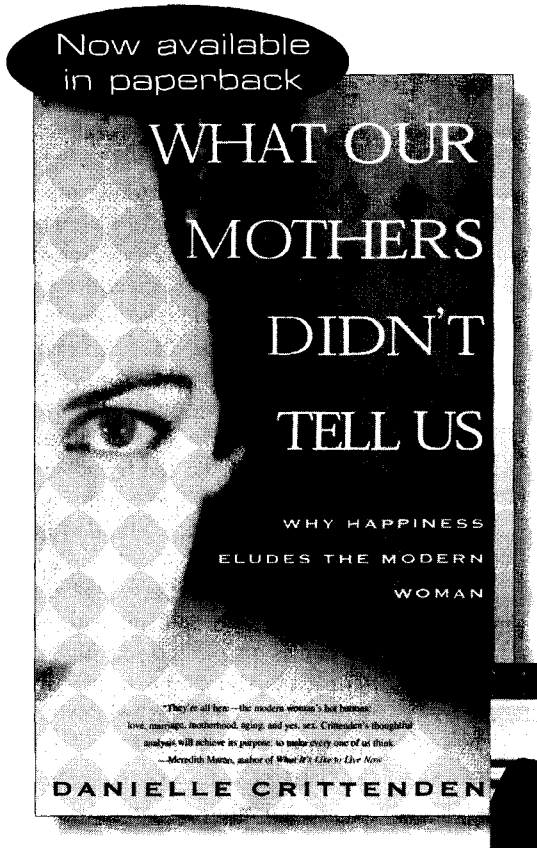
Fitzgerald says building such a system was quixotic at best and all the supposed adults in the administration knew as much. Nonetheless, Reagan's senior advisers were willing to support the president for their own reasons.

Secretary of State George Shultz wanted to use the idea of SDI as a bargaining chip to force more concessions from the Soviets in strategic arms talks. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, on the other hand, wanted missile defenses to enhance U.S. strategic power. The result was a country fooled and a program funded by Congress that by all expert accounts, says the author, "did not, and could not for the foreseeable future, exist." Her conclusion: "Star Wars . . . was surely [Reagan's] greatest rhetorical triumph."

Rhetorical success aside, Fitzgerald rejects any notion that the prospect of Star Wars contributed in any significant way to bringing the Cold War to an end. The world historical figure is Gorbachev, not Reagan. At most, the president saw the premier as a Soviet of a different stripe well before most conservatives did, but his policies had virtually nothing to do with the reforms or policy changes Gorbachev put forward. The "Soviets did not respond to the Reagan administration's military buildup" and "it was Gorbachev's efforts to reverse the decline and to modernize his country that knocked the props out from under the system. The revolution was in essence a series of decisions made by one man."

Fitzgerald's case is argued with consistency and imagination but grounded less in fact than in her prejudices. She sees SDI as a political ploy of unprecedented audacity by the Reagan administration because she is unable to give any credence to the view that by 1980 the arms control process, combined with Moscow's unrelenting modernization of its nuclear forces, had left us in a strategic box that allowed for no obvious answers. Being a policy wonk would not be sufficient (as Carter's record had made clear) to address the depth of the strategic crisis the West faced. What was needed was precisely the quality Reagan had in spades: a capacity, as Dinesh D'Souza observed, "to see the world differently from the way it is."

Furthermore, SDI was fully consistent with the administration's earliest conceptions of how to meet the Soviet challenge. The 1982 Defense Guidance, for example, outlined a competitive strategy for dealing with Moscow that suggested we develop "weapons that are difficult for the Soviets to counter, impose disproportionate costs, open up new areas of



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major military competition and obsolesce previous Soviet investment."

The goal was to put stress on what some in the White House, including Reagan himself, thought was a Soviet regime that was militarily strong but systemically weak. The evidence suggested Moscow had placed a grand strategic bet in the 1970s of "guns over butter," hoping to take decisive advantage of America's global paralysis.

The bet might have paid off, except Reagan's America refused to roll over and play dead. Fitzgerald is largely right when she says the Soviets did not respond to SDI or the Reagan military buildup by an expansion of their own programs. But that is because by the mid-1980s, the Soviets faced a situation in which they could hardly squeeze more from a sick and technologically backward economy, shackled with a huge defense and imperial burden.

Although it is true that they could have patched things together for a bit longer, much of the Soviet political and military elite were increasingly pessimistic about the prospects for a long-term competition with the West. In short, there is a reason the Communists turned to Gorbachev when they did and, significantly, stayed with him as long as they did. When it comes to understanding the dynamic that led to the end of the Cold War, Fitzgerald is simply wrong.

Way Out There in the Blue is an exhausting account of absolutely every shortcoming and failure of Ronald Reagan and his national security team. It takes at face value all Russian proposals and accepts without any skepticism the analysis of strategic matters by every liberal commentator, scientist, or Democratic party official. At the same time, it consistently disparages Reagan's policy proposals as unrealistic, mere public relations, or the product of a dysfunctional cabinet. It concludes with a one-sided sketch of the post-Cold War program to develop missile defenses.

So one-sided is *Way Out There in the Blue* that the initial impulse is to dismiss the book out of hand. But, as with Fitzgerald's previous volume, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*, for which she won a Pulitzer Prize, I suspect everyone but conservatives will tout this admittedly well-written work as the definitive, popularly accessible account of the period.

This is especially true in the absence of any competing accounts which are as comprehensive and not hagiographic. Reagan was no Willy Loman president and he deserves historians who understand his achievement. ♦

Rodham in Gomorrah

The next senator from New York?

BY NOEMIE EMERY

Hillary Clinton has been good for business. Exceedingly good. Whole segments of large industries rest on her being. No pundit need want for a topic while she is among us. The cable news channels are much in her debt. Magazines sell out, as do books about her. A Washington think tank sponsored a Hillary forum where foes and fans of the current first lady had at each other from nine in the morning till five. She has also, of course, been quite good for women, notably those who have made names and money critiquing her. As we prepare to bid adieu to Hillary the first lady and bonjour to Hillary the seeker of office, last year's *Hell to Pay* by Barbara Olson and *First Partner* by Joyce Milton are joined by Laura Ingraham's *The Hillary Trap* and Peggy Noonan's *The Case Against Hillary Clinton*, both indicting the first lady from distinct conservative points of view.

Laura Ingraham, the law clerk turned pundit, makes the policy case against Hillary Clinton, a woman whose theories are harmful to her sex and whose pioneering life has been a fake. Thus, Hillary the free woman is ultra-dependent, Hillary the strong woman encourages theories of victimhood, and she who claims to speak for the future has visions that come from the past. Hillary, Ingraham says, stands for policies that lock poor children into failed public schools; dumb down college curricula with "women's studies" and other such drivel; strangle female entrepreneurs with regulations and taxes and preach a doctrine of women as helpless without the cover of the overseeing Nanny State.

She also, Ingraham writes, espouses a "sisterhood" that is divisive and partisan: that defines ideas she dislikes as anti-woman and tries to rally women around liberal causes and candidates, while showing no interest in stay-at-home mothers, would-be owners of businesses, and female victims of liberal Democrats, such as Kathleen Willey, Juanita Broaddrick, and Paula Jones. Thus, her ideas "set women back rather than forward," protecting "public schools that don't teach our children core subjects or . . . values, . . . a workplace constricted by government edicts, . . . [and] a permissive sexual culture that tolerates rampant infidelity and divorce."

So much for Hillary, maker of policy. Hillary the feminist, new-model woman is also a fiction, most dependent when she claims to be strongest, taking the health care brief in 1993 as a gift from the husband she backed in the face of adultery charges; most dependent of all in her race for the Senate, which rests in part on her husband's fund-raising abilities, runs on the perks that she gets from the White House (foreign trips, ceremonial expo-

Noemie Emery, a frequent contributor, lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

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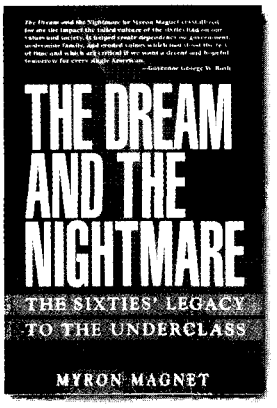
Changing the Terms of the Debate



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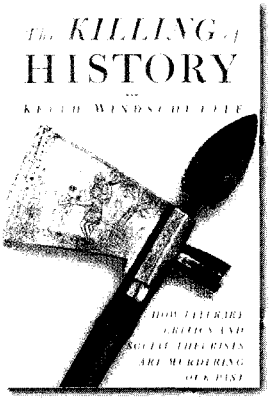

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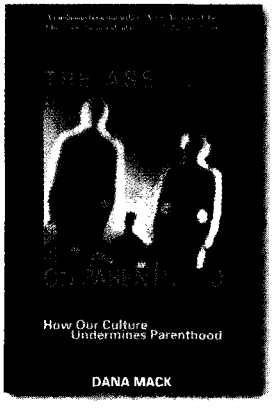

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sure, the assaults on her rivals from federal agencies), and was made possible in the first place by her fame in the impeachment drama as the put-upon wife. Cannily, Ingraham fingers Hillary's kinship with "that woman," the one with whom her husband claimed not to have had sex. Her Senate run and the rise of Monica Lewinsky as celebrity, author, and designer of handbags rest in whole on the pull of their own private stories, their personal doings with Bill. "Without the backdrop of her husband's sordid tale . . . Hillary's fame would fade," Ingraham tells us, correctly. "With Hillary as the reigning role model, you can count on groupies like Monica to be found not far behind."

But Hillary the policymaker and careerist takes a backseat in oddness to Hillary the wife. No one can have failed to notice in the feminist reaction to earlier scandals about Gary Hart and Ted Kennedy an underlying note of condescension to their wives. Homemakers all, they were not killer lawyers. This humiliation happened to stay-at-homes, not to thoroughly modern women. But Hillary Clinton proved that it could happen to them too, and when it did, she sank to new lows in abasement, not only forgiving her renegade husband, but moving herself out in front to defend him.

Thus the Clinton marriage, which was sold in the 1992 campaign as breaking new ground in mutual respect and equality, turned out worse than the old kind, blending the double standard of the past with the free-for-all, no-standards-at-all mores of the present. Ingraham calls it "the modern view that moral values are relative, sexual misconduct is trivial, and being 'judgmental' is the worst sin of all."

Ingraham writes of the political Hillary and does not touch on the subject of corruption. Peggy Noonan writes about nothing else. She is a conservative who became famous crafting lyrical speeches for President Reagan, but her view is not that of a partisan. She dedicates her book to Eleanor Roosevelt, and it soon becomes clear that her affection is for the heroic figures—the cross-partisan lovers of country and causes. Her concern is not with the liberal Hillary, the feminist Hillary, or even Hillary the non-role model for women, though she does note that Mrs. Clinton's one public achievement was a health care proposal on which Congress never voted and that her lifelong record of working for children consists mainly of saying she wants to.

AP / Wide World Photos

The Hillary Trap
Looking for Power in All the Wrong Places
by Laura Ingraham
Hyperion, 224 pp., $23.95

The Case Against Hillary Clinton
by Peggy Noonan
ReganBooks, 181 pp., $24

She also notes Hillary's "antic belligerence," unpromising in one who hopes to work in a collegial legislative body. Her concern is with Hillary, the consort of Bill, co-author with him of a corrupt and tawdry regime.

Noonan's book is a story about this corruption, and the tale that she tells us is this: The Clintons are people of talent (not as much as they think, but still genuine talent), with an abnormal hunger for worship, unchecked by any countervailing attachments to things or causes beyond themselves. The pair, she quotes an unnamed Clinton intimate, "have a great need to be loved and admired by others. . . . They have an overinflated view of themselves, but . . . they can't maintain that unless they get the adulation of an individual, or . . . in her case and his case, a crowd." And she quotes from a text on narcissistic disorders, "They have little enjoyment of life other than the tributes they receive from others or from their own grandiose fantasies, and they feel restless and bored when the external glitter wears off."

Thus, they seek public office not really for power, but to give themselves a platform from which to seek tribute. The platform itself, not what they do with it, becomes the overriding object of their lives. "If it serves their advantage to take an action that is in the good of the country, they will certainly take it. . . . If not, not. . . . If defending and advancing left-liberalism will serve their purpose at any given moment, they will defend and advance [it]. . . . If not, not." Thus, they will be for large, and then for small government; be both the New and the oldest of the Democrats; pass welfare reform, and then run on the claim that only they can prevent its terrible consequences. Facing a weak opponent, as in 1996, they will tweak laws to amass vast sums of money by means that degrade their office. Faced with investigations into possible lawbreaking, they will launch scorched-earth attacks on their critics. Faced with impeachment, they will smear, threaten, and slander their enemies; distract the country for a solid year from its business, launch armed attacks upon foreign countries, and, of course, lie.

And for what? Not to do much, not to preserve their party's agenda, but simply to continue their hold on high office, where they can strut and perform. It is why he talks about running in Arkansas; why she is running

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in New York; why (Noonan says) if she loses, she will run in Illinois later. "They're going to need a lot of therapy when this is over," Noonan quotes a Clinton friend saying, to wean them of the adulation that they seem to be hooked on. But they have no intention of letting this *ever* be over. "He cannot live a genuinely private life," Noonan tells us. "Neither can she. . . . Left to himself, he is bored, anxious. . . . She cannot live a life without the promise, the hope, of power and admiration. . . . If she did, she would collapse and blow away."

All this can sound rather like psychobabble; and it is tempting to project diagnoses onto those we don't know and don't like. But this said, it should be said also that those denying Noonan's conclusions should be asked to tell us in detail where she is wrong—and also to tell us why the Clintons behave as they do.

What, beyond themselves (and abortion), can this couple be said to believe in? What administration has ever been so utterly guided by polls? Why is it that the only big things the Clinton administration has done—welfare reform and the balanced budget—were forced on it by polls and the Republican Congress? Why is it that serious people have said so often that Clinton deals largely in blue smoke and mirrors, that he pushes hard choices off into the future, that he prefers the illusion of movement to genuine progress and the appearance of peace to security? Why have Bill Clinton's biggest successes been in his talk, not his acts? And why have his speeches had so little meaning? Other men—the Roosevelts, Reagans, and Kennedys—have courted and basked in public approval, but their speeches were made to change minds and had long-lasting resonance. Clinton's speeches, which wow those who hear them, vanish next day into air. People remember and still quote those other men's phrases. Except for "the meaning of is" and "I did not have sex with that woman," no one remembers a word Clinton has said. Never before have so many boffo performances added up to so little. But for Clinton, they have served their critical purpose. They have made *him* feel important, and vital, and glowing. And for him, as Noonan says, this is the point.

Noonan says also that the Clintons do not love their country, an explosive charge to level at any first couple and one that, again, is hard to prove. And yet, on a cold-eyed assessment of what they have done while in office, one would be hard-pressed to show that they do. Rather, from Bill's dodging of the draft in 1969 to his multiple perjuries thirty years later, through the desecrations of office that happened between them, they seem to have established a pattern of using the country to pleasure and further themselves. Can anyone name any instance of either Clinton's taking any risks to advance the national interest? Has either ever challenged an audience? Taken flak for something important, as Reagan did on his defense agenda and Kennedy and Johnson did on civil rights?

Noonan takes offense at the famous photo of two Clinton friends (sitcom queens Markie Post and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason) jumping on Lincoln's bed, finding in it a shortage of reverence. Doubtless, it is the same sensibility that led Clinton himself to think it would be a gas to put up affluent strangers for cash in that bedroom, to serve coffee to convicts for cash in the Map Room, and to receive oral sex from a college-age intern while discussing troop deployments with congresspeople on the phone.

Further clues to the Clintons' affections are the things on which they spend their energies and time. Since health care tanked before the 1994 elections, the Clintons' attention to issues has not been intense. In 1995 and 1996, the president moved swiftly and skillfully against the Republican Congress to keep from being dumped in the ash bin of history. From January 1998 through February 1999, the Clintons and their staffs were in continual overdrive, to counter the menace of early retirement. But when the threats to their persons are lessened—as in

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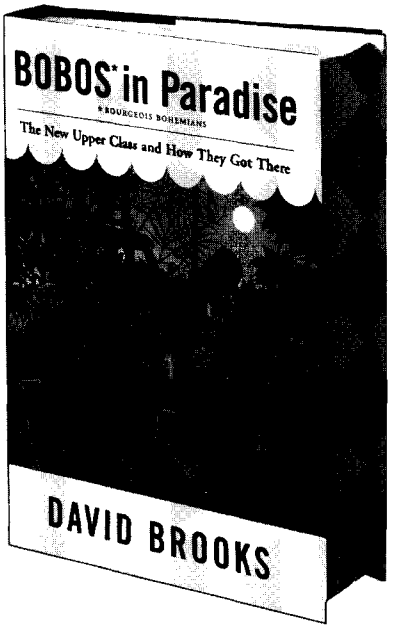

"The most delightful dissection of the brainy classes since A. C. Spectorsky's *The Exurbanites*."

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1997, and from early 1999 through the present—the Clintons tend to drift. The country's interests alone do not seem to engage them. Free of threat, free of pressure, free to address the hard problems without fear of voter reprisal, Clinton has done what he likes: He plays golf, hangs out with sports stars and film stars, and raises money from the mega-rich. Picking his audiences carefully, he can gorge himself on praise and tell himself he is wildly popular—the belief that he needs to go on.

Bill Clinton has probably been like this forever, but for the first lady, adulation may be an acquired taste: As the evidence closed in that summer and fall of the impeachment, she would go to fund-raising events in the Hamptons and be the woman courted, not the woman scorned. "She owns New York!" crowed the state chairman, as the buyout kings and makers of sex-and-violence epics showered tributes upon her. As it turned out, this was not wholly accurate, but Mrs. Clinton may well have decided on her run for the Senate in the hopes it would mean more of the same. The formal announcement of her candidacy was a spectacle, televised live nationwide, with its huge podium, crowds, songs, and entertainment, placards shouting "Hillary!" (like "Evita!"), and unhappy-looking rows of state officeholders hauled in to pay due homage to the queen.

The usual assortment of Clinton friends have criticized Noonan's book as over the top and extravagant. Judging by the record, however, this charge is inaccurate: It is the Clintons themselves who are over the top; so much so that an objective account of their doings seems extreme. The common defense of the Clintons' apologists is to take each discrete sin of theirs and match it against some other discrete sin—Kennedy had many women; Reagan had Iran-Contra—so that it all seems quite normal. This can work for a time, until you suddenly realize that you have to pool the sins of a great crowd of people to match what the Clintons have done all by themselves.

AP / Wide World Photos

Other administrations have had their scandals, but none had so many. Other presidents have had shady associates, but few before this have had quite so many. Other presidents have had other women, but none has ever been accused so often of assault and harassment, from exposure to groping to rape. The Clinton defense against this is not, as Noonan says, the "big lie," but something quite like it: the multiple lie, the simple overwhelming weight of so many lies that in the aggregate they at last come to seem too much to untangle, and the country at large is left stunned.

Thus, where a single lie or scandal might merit outrage, the overload lessens the impact. Thus, when the rape charge finally surfaced—which would have blown a huge hole straight through a less tainted figure—the country was too numbed to absorb it; which may have been part of the strategy. "The Clintons know that many Americans find it very hard, even impossible, to see them clearly," writes Noonan. "They know people wrestle with who they are, throw up their hands, and in time stop thinking about it, because of the sheer impossibility of seeing them for what they are." Their brazenness itself becomes their shield.

This, Noonan says, is the core of the Clintons' corruption: In making us accept them as leaders, even tarnished ones, they have forced us to lower ourselves. Because of them, all sorts of thresholds have been subtly lowered. Because their offense was not one large thing, like Watergate, but a cluster of smaller ones, none of which *by itself* reached that level of outrage, they have forced us to tolerate a kind of coarseness, a kind of deceit, and perhaps even a kind of criminality we had not before bent to. "They left behind a country . . . whose political life has been distorted. . . . They have damaged America's culture by bringing a new level of indecency to our public discourse, and into our living rooms. . . . They have compromised the national character by forcing the country to choose between the trauma and dislocation of the removal of a president and seeming to accept [his] low actions. . . . And in all of this, she has helped him. She was his partner in power; they did it all." Hillary and her husband have damaged this country to serve their ambitions. And, like her husband, she seems neither to know nor to care. ♦

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The Old College Try

Political correctness resurrects the academic novel.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

It was in his 1919 poem "The Scholars" that William Butler Yeats savaged universities and the dry sticks who populate them: *All shuffle there; all cough in ink. . . . / All think what other people think.*

That criticism has echoed through the years in novel after novel about the academic life. Scholars, with *bald heads forgetful of their sins*, Yeats declared, merely *edit and annotate the lines / that young men, tossing on their beds, / Rhymed out in love's despair*. In innumerable works of academic fiction—Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1953) in Britain and Bernard Malamud's *A New Life* (1961) in the United States, to mention only two—young scholars, lured by the prospect of lifetime employment and respectability, are forced at last to choose whether to spend their lives thinking what other people think or to seek an authentic existence away from those who cough in ink.

The Human Stain
by Philip Roth
Houghton Mifflin, 361 pp., $26

Blue Angel
by Francine Prose
HarperCollins, 304 pp., $25

Disgrace
by J.M. Coetzee
Viking, 220 pp., $23.95

Virtual Morality
by Christopher Hill
Pushcart, 325 pp., $24.50

Through the 1950s and 1960s, these academic tales were mostly comic in tone; indeed, jacket copywriters found it nearly impossible to describe them without using the word "satirical." The stories were full of fusty and dim-witted deans, sycophantic assistants, tea and cookies, and ghastly, wine-soaked parties. And yet, though the life from which their heroes had to escape was stifling and conformist, its greatest sins were ineffectuality and impotence.

But something happened to the university novel at the close of the 1960s—because something had happened to the university itself. Following the revolution in consciousness wrought by the student movement, campuses no longer posed as elite cultural repositories for the best that had been thought and said. Instead, they became home to grand theories that rejected the very idea of elite cultural repositories: history from below, deconstructionism, structuralism, post-structuralism, post-Marxism. Its teachers were young, charismatic professors who seemed determined to prove how effectual and potent—how unlike Yeats's scholars—they could be.

Against all this, the academic novel developed a new satirical tone in protest, a tone both foreboding and elegiac. There grew a distinct sense that something good and noble about campus life was under threat, not from Yeats's pedants but from theory-heads spouting the latest in designer gibberish. In David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975), for instance, a British scholar of the old school finds his life, work, and marriage bed overtaken by a trendy, flamboyant American pseudo-scholar named Morris Zapp (based on the real-life theory-head Stanley Fish).

With *The History Man* (1975) and *Rates of Exchange* (1983), the English author Malcolm Bradbury took the academic satire to a new and more frightening level. In *The History Man*, a sociologist with a taste for Karl Marx decides his mission is "to prod the future into everyone you can lay your hands on," and he succeeds, over the course of the novel, in purging and destroying a student who disagrees with his embrace of critical theory. In *Rates of Exchange*, postmodernism has even more dire consequences when a linguist on a trip behind the Iron Curtain is given a secret manuscript by a dissident whose terrifying reality doesn't leave room for theory. In passing his manuscript to someone who isn't even sure words have meaning, however, the dissident inadvertently consigns himself to a prison cell even as his book meets a fiery end at the hands of airport officials who mistake it for a bomb.

Farce these books certainly were, but they had a tragic undercurrent. Lives, great ideas, painful truths, even literature itself were being destroyed by the university's embrace of the new. And in the years since books like *The History Man* first appeared, the academic novel has grown even more bitter—in part because even those (no-longer young) professors from the 1960s at last seem to realize the ease with which the monster they helped create can be turned against them. The rise of political correctness, that misbegotten handmaiden of postmodernism, has unleashed on

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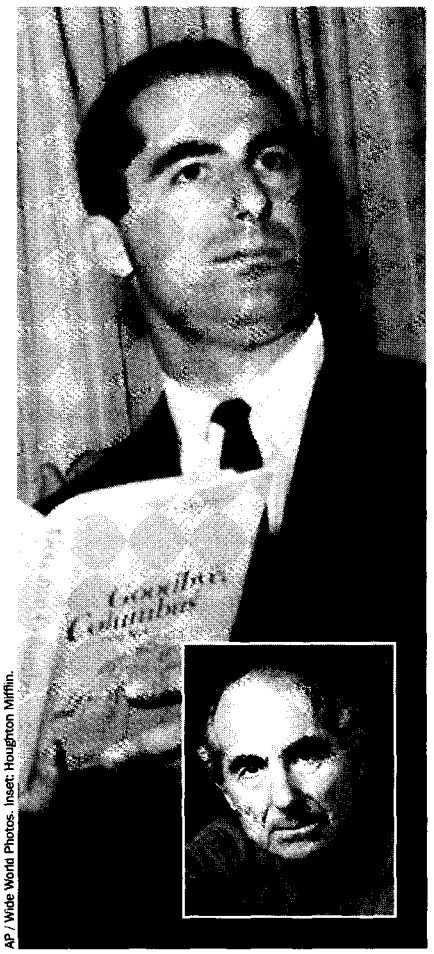
campus the enormous destructive power of politicized accusations and the star-chamber methods with which they are handled. And now academic fiction is in full cry against it.

In Christopher Hill's splendidly plotted *Virtual Morality* (winner of the Pushcart Prize), a dean long intimidated by his campus's most radical professors goes along with their idea of establishing a "student oversight committee" to examine infractions of their university's code of conduct with almost unlimited powers. When one of those professors takes offense at a frat boy's giggles in her mandatory Women's Studies class, she asks him how many women he's raped and insults his father. The frat boy calls her a "fat old dyke" and is immediately expelled from the university by the new student oversight committee.

The frat boy's lawyer thinks he has an open-and-shut First Amendment case, especially since the terrified dean was in the classroom at the time. But though he fancies himself a good man and fears perjuring himself after he is subpoenaed, the dean lies under oath anyway and finds it liberating: "He had walked through the doorway, and lightning hadn't struck, his tongue hadn't snapped.... He was on the winning team, now."

A convert to the new postmodernist faith, the dean tells a skeptical friend, "I reject the premise that truth is an absolute." To which his friend responds, "That must have been very convenient for you when you were giving your deposition." Throughout the process, it never occurs to the dean that there is a person whose future has been placed in jeopardy by the actions of a committee he knows to be unjust and unfair. This is not an attractive kid, Hill makes clear, and his father is a tyrannical bully. But even so, the kid doesn't deserve the ruination of his future.

Virtual Morality is being marketed as satire, which is to be expected, but this suspenseful and intelligent book reads more like a bulletin from the front. Christopher Hill is a graduate student outraged by the collapse of standards and principles on campus, and in his righteous anger he cannot resist ending his book with an exclamation point—a scene in which one of the radical professors delivers a mustache-twirling sermon of evil that makes far too explicit the connection between postmodern ideology and totalitarianism. "The fascists had some good ideas," the professor says. "Many of the early deconstructionists were fascists. Did you know that? It's true. Even old Paul de Man never apologized for writing propaganda for the Nazis in Belgium."



AP / Wide World Photos. Inset: Houghton Mifflin.

Philip Roth in 1960 and, inset, 2000.

Truer words were never spoken, but *Virtual Morality* suffers from its author's didacticism. A better book is Francine Prose's *Blue Angel*, which embraces the ambiguity in human behavior that Hill rejects. Prose's agonizingly effective novel tells the story of Swenson, a forty-seven-year-old creative-writing professor at a second-rate New England college filled with eager but nearly illiterate students. He is the model of late-century American academics: He has contempt for his students but will not instruct them, for "he wants the students to see him as generous, giving—on their side." Rather than explaining why little good can come from short stories like the one featuring a boy having sex with a chicken carcass, Swenson lets his students tear each other apart while he, the author of a single successful novel years earlier, remains patronizingly above it all.

But then a painfully shy, multiple-pierced nineteen-year-old named Angela Argo gives him chapters from a novel she is writing called "Eggs," about a painfully shy high school girl's affair with her science teacher. Swenson believes that at last he has uncovered a true talent (though the excerpts of "Eggs" that appear in *Blue Angel* are nowhere near as good as Swenson thinks they are) and begins to encourage her.

Self-satisfied to the point of stupidity, Swenson heedlessly marches down the path to his own destruction. He does everything wrong: lies to his beloved wife, ignores his alienated daughter when she comes home hoping for a rapprochement, even appropriates Angela's novel as his own when asked what he's working on. Finally, he and Angela end up on the bed in her dorm room, and only the shattering of a rotten molar inside his mouth aborts their affair.

Swenson loses everything. But the story of his relations with Angela is far more complicated than the school's disciplinary code can admit. She may be nineteen and inarticulate, but she is a knowing and Machiavellian creature who manipulates her teacher throughout the novel. No innocent, she has spent time as a phone-sex worker. It is Angela who maneuvers him into her dorm room and locks the door. And she does so, it turns out, for a pragmatic reason: She wants him to present her novel to his editor at a New York publishing house. She gets everything she wants, while Swenson finds himself falsely accused of molesting his own

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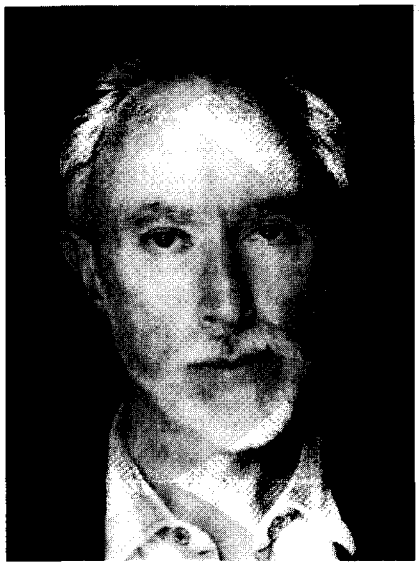

HarperCollins, Viking, Pushcart.

Francine Prose, J.M. Coetzee, and Christopher Hill.

daughter. Euston College, the setting of *Blue Angel*, is a bucolic nightmare world in which ignorance and corruption walk hand in hand through the picturesque trees and rolling hills. But though *Blue Angel* is a painful book, it is a comedy. Swenson is a low character who gets what he deserves, even if he doesn't deserve what he gets.

That is not true of J.M. Coetzee's Booker-Prize-winning novel, *Disgrace*, the story of another self-satisfied literature professor who sleeps with a student and loses everything—but in the process finds his lost soul. At first it seems that Coetzee is attempting something new: a tragic academic novel, rather than a comic one. But it turns out that the book is really an allegory about South Africa, Coetzee's homeland. In *Disgrace*, the professor plays the role of the old South African order. His stubborn insistence on the rightness of his own behavior in the face of universal condemnation casts him into the wilderness, where he is forced to confront the rage of the black majority. That rage takes the form of the rape of his daughter—a rape she refuses to tell the police about. And when it turns out that she is pregnant, she decides to give birth to the child as an act of expiation and reconciliation. Only when her father embraces his own powerlessness is he saved from the wreck of his life.

Disgrace is a powerful but strange book—brilliantly spare but, in its own way, as wooden in its moralism as Christopher Hill's *Virtual Morality*. It has fallen instead to Philip Roth to attempt the full-blown academic tragedy that has been lurking in the novelistic mists since the late 1960s. Roth's *The Human Stain* is half a masterpiece—the half having to do with the life and secrets of an elderly classicist named Coleman Silk. Silk shatters the reclusive Berkshires existence of Roth's alter-ego and the novel's narrator, Nathan Zuckerman, by storming into Zuckerman's house one day with a tale of infamy and woe.

"There is something fascinating about what moral suffering can do to someone who is in no obvious way a week or feeble person," Zuckerman writes of Silk, who has kept his youthful boxer's trim and fighting spirit in his years successfully struggling to end the domination of nearby Athena College by the sort of scholars Yeats loathed. After long service as a dean, he had returned to the classroom to teach Greek drama, and when two students he had never seen repeatedly failed to show up for his class, he asked, "Does anyone know these people? Do they exist or are they spooks?"

The two missing students were black. And so began the cycle of politically correct protest. Silk's assurances that he was referring to "ectoplasm" availed him nothing. "Spooks" was "the single self-incriminating word of the many millions spoken aloud in his years of teaching and administering at Athena." And worse than the controversy it engendered, "spooks" was "the word that, as Coleman understood things, directly led to his wife's death." Silk's troubles had "blotted out the million difficulties of the Silks' marriage. . . . [They] were side by side again, waving their fists in the faces of people they hated more profoundly than, in their most insufferable moments, they could manage to hate each other." One morning Iris Silk awakened with a headache. She died the next day.

"Those people murdered Iris!" he rages to Zuckerman. Silk had made enemies in his time as dean, and so no one cared or dared to stand with him after he uttered the word "spooks." In his fury he quit the college, and when the novel begins, he has just spent two years writing a memoir of the incident—a memoir he decides to shelve after beginning an affair with a cleaning woman thirty-six years his junior named Faunia Farley.

Faunia wants and feels nothing but sex, and through her, Silk has reawakened to the erotic: "I'm taking Viagra, Nathan. . . . Without Viagra none of this would be happening." But then comes an anonymous letter that destroys his new-found equilibrium and reawakens the rage. "Everyone knows you're sexually exploiting an abused, illiterate woman half your age," the letter reads, and he recognizes the handwriting as belonging to a young postmodernist on campus named Delphine Roux. Silk again goes on a rampage, demanding that his lawyer sue her for slander. And when his young,

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well-spoken, patronizing attorney tells Silk he would be better off if he forgot the suit, the classicist erupts: "I never again want to hear that self-admiring voice of yours or see your smug... lily-white face." The lawyer cannot help wondering: "Why lily-white?"

Silk is repeating the last words spoken to him by the brother he has not seen in more than forty years. For the secret no one has known about Silk—not his wife, not his children—is that while the world believes Silk is a Russian Jew, he is in truth a light-skinned black man who decided after his exacting father's death to reinvent himself. Not for nothing had his educated father, whose favorite play was *Julius Caesar*, named him Coleman Brutus Silk—because Coleman's decision to live as a white man means he must betray his mother by telling everyone that she is dead.

Roth has borrowed this astonishing twist from the real-life story of the literary critic Anatole Broyard. But just as he borrowed the skeleton of another true story for his magnificent 1997 *American Pastoral*, Roth has transmuted the Broyard story into something somber and grand. By making Silk an expert on Greek tragedy, Roth has found a way to explore a peculiarly American form of hubris: the idea of self-invention. For decades, even through the birth of four children whose own skin color might reveal the truth about him, Silk has experienced the thrill of having kept his secret. But as any Greek hero could have told him, there is no escaping cosmic justice for an act of hubris.

The story of Coleman Silk's fall is a triumph, as is Roth's description of Athena College: There's a priceless scene, for instance, in which the deconstructionist Delphine Roux spends hours trying to find the right words for her personal ad in the *New York Review of Books*. Unfortunately, the rest of *The Human Stain* is an abject failure, stilted and false. Roth sadly resorts to the most hackneyed cliché of recent times in his portrait of the novel's working-class villain, a Vietnam War veteran who is, of course, psychotic and deranged.

Despite the book's profound weaknesses, Roth has succeeded in bringing the academic novel full circle. Yeats may have been disgusted by the academics who drained the life-force from great and dangerous works: *Lord, what would they say / Did their Catullus walk that way?* But at least Yeats's despised classicists knew the erotic Latin works of Catullus, knew who Catullus was.

What would Yeats make of today's universities, where scholars don't just misunderstand high art, but argue that the very phrase "high art" has no meaning—and where inconsequential television shows and rock songs are paid the same kind of respect once afforded Catullus? Perhaps, instead of composing a savage poem like "The Scholars," a Yeats reborn in the year 2000 would instead offer up—as Philip Roth has done in *The Human Stain*—a rueful tribute to those who still believe in grappling with greatness. ♦

Breeding Dissension

The campaign against privileges for parents.

BY DANIELLE CRITTENDEN

Just when you thought every conceivable group with a grievance had already mobilized itself and rented offices on K Street, a new one is threatening to rumble.

Its members come in every color and every size. They are not poor—indeed, they probably have more money than most people. In fact, according to journalist Elinor Burkett, in whom they have at last found a sympathetic voice, they can be described as "the walking embodiment of strong and invincible." So what's their complaint?

They don't have children—and they don't want them. They're tired of being made to feel that they should want and have them. They're resentful of having to pinch-hit on the job for those who do. And they'd like some of the parental pork for themselves.

In her new book, *The Baby Boon: How Family-Friendly America Cheats the Childless*, Burkett tells the poignant story of a woman named Cheryl. Cheryl is a forty-year-old concrete inspector who has endured many slights over the years. She has uncomplainingly worked extra hours when her co-workers pleaded child-care problems for "the umpteenth time," although none of them have ever returned the favor so that she could pursue her hobby of cutting stained glass. She has politely deflected the meaningful looks from friends and relatives hoping for happy news. She swallowed her fury while calculating the taxes she'd save if she could claim some "kiddie credits"—credits that she bitterly reckoned would give her the money to buy "antique glass at thirty dollars a square foot."

But the final straw landed on her back at a video store. It had been a hard week in the concrete-inspection business and she wanted to relax with a movie. But when she parked her truck at an empty spot at the mall, she was confronted with what she calls "The Sign": The space was reserved for expectant mothers and parents of infants. As if that weren't enough, the clerk let a mother with an empty infant carrier jump to the front of the queue.

"Does not having kids make me a second-class citizen, unworthy of the most basic consideration?" Cheryl erupts to Burkett. "When does it get to be my turn to have my interests respected and honored in America?"

People like Cheryl, Burkett claims, form the heart of an increasingly defiant and vocal movement: the child-free

Danielle Crittenden is the author of What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Eludes the Modern Woman *(Simon & Schuster).*

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(a name that sounds like some new brand of aerosol child repellent for old ladies protective of their furniture). Burkett, who is child-free herself, regards the group's plight as analogous to that of blacks in the segregated South. This will probably strike some as a rather off-putting comparison, but then, *The Baby Boon* is a rather off-putting book. It's full of characters who talk like Sandy Graf, a 37-year-old designer who is "childless by choice": "Breeders get so much time off to tend to the emergency sicknesses or the accidents or the school this and that. Who covers for them, who works more hours? The non-breeders, that's who. *And no one notices*. We are punished for not squirting out spawn."

Yet despite its wince-making crudity, *Baby Boon* is a curiously interesting book. The child-free may be resentful, embittered, and whiney. But to uphold their cause, Burkett—a self-described liberal feminist—has backed herself into the same position as the social conservatives she dislikes nearly as much as she dislikes babies. A dogged reporter, Burkett has tracked down and calculated the cost of every one of the benefits parents and children receive, from the "family-friendly" workplaces at companies like IBM to the boondoggles and pork rolls buried in government policy. And she points out that nearly all these benefits are wasted.

Companies may claim their costly day-care facilities help attract women workers. But, as Burkett wonders:

> How can turnover and absenteeism drop so precipitously in response to child-care assistance, family leaves, and scholarships for employees' kids when, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only one-third of the workforce has children at home under the age of eighteen? How can day-care centers account for 50 percent reductions in turnover when only 8 percent of women workers have kids under the age of six? How can a company like Chase Manhattan Bank spend seven-hundred thousand dollars a year to run a day-care center in Brooklyn for 110 children and justify the expenditures by citing 'return-on-investment' analyses showing savings of $1.5 million in avoided absenteeism alone? Were the parents of those 110 children missing that much work?

She concludes: "Adoption allowances, maternity and paternity leave, child care, sick-kid care, after-school care, and summer camps don't do all that much for workers who do have kids since the vast majority don't adopt, don't seem to want institutional day care, and can't take long parental leaves because they can't afford six months without income."

Underwood & Underwood / CORBIS

The Baby Boon
How Family-Friendly America Cheats the Childless
by Elinor Burkett
Free Press, 256 pp., $25

There's No Place Like Work
How Business, Government, and Our Obsession with Work Have Driven Parents Home
by Brian C. Robertson
Spence, 224 pp., $24.95

Don't seem to want institutional day care. Burkett may be the first feminist willing to acknowledge that previously unpalatable truth. So what are mothers supposed to do? Burkett concludes that modern women's unwillingness to deal with the responsibilities of children causes them to foist that responsibility onto others.

In her view, all but the poorest of mothers (she says "parents" but we know what she means) should either stay home altogether or work part-time while their children are young. She is quite willing to sacrifice the thirty-year-old idea of the working mother if that's what it takes to "throw 'parental' entitlements into the dustbin of bad ideas." Which puts Burkett in the same feminist camp as, oh, Pat Robertson. And also Brian Robertson (no relation), who criticizes parental entitlements from the point of view of the pro-family right in his new book, *There's No Place Like Work: How Business, Government, and Our Obsession with Work Have Driven Parents from Home*.

Robertson, unlike Burkett, recognizes that the exodus of mothers into the full-time workforce has been a greater catastrophe for children than it has for the childless (he also shows—contra Burkett—that the rising tax burden has fallen hardest on traditional families with kids, not on childless couples).

Recent social science data, which Robertson adduces in detail, reveal disturbing effects of parental absence from the home: It has been linked to an increase in early sexual activity, poor academic performance, feelings of worthlessness and loneliness, depression, and even "borderline psychopathology" among children. A study published last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* "concluded that teens who feel they are paid attention to by their parents are less likely to use drugs, drink alcohol, smoke or have sex."

But how are they going to get that extra attention? The incentives to work these days are much greater than those to stay home. They are bolstered by social attitudes that value paid work over unpaid, and working mothers over those who depend upon their husbands for support.

For most of this century, Robertson observes bitterly, groups claiming to help women—including self-described feminist groups—recognized the need for the special protection of mothers. They championed such inequitable, out-of-fashion policies as baby bonuses, government support for widowed

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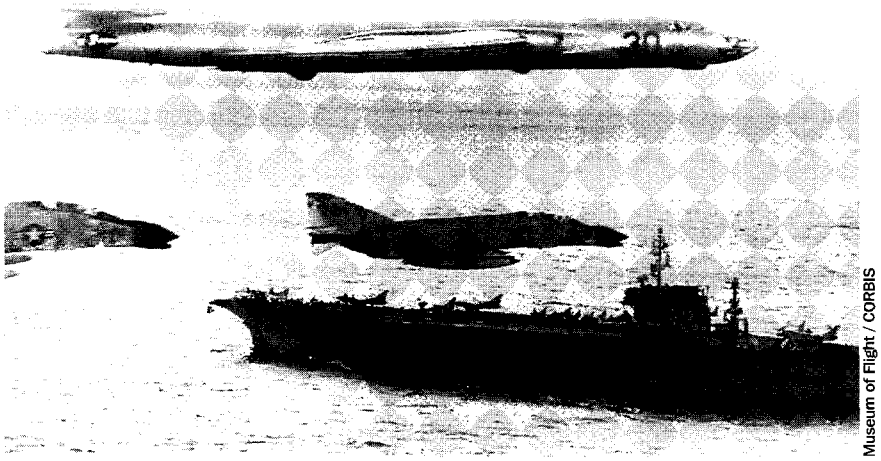
mothers (but not those who had babies out of wedlock), and the "family-wage," which paid more to a father supporting a wife and kids than one without. He cites the work of massively popular organizations like the Mothers' Congress (endorsed by Teddy Roosevelt) that worked to help mothers leave the workforce as well as old-time feminist Katherine Anthony, who said in 1915, "The program of feminism is not the mere imitation of masculine gestures and motions."

Today, self-proclaimed women's organizations work to do the opposite (and opposite to modern women's wishes, the majority of whom still profess a desire to stay home with their children). The result is the Band-Aid efforts by governments and corporations alike to make up for the loss of parents—something they can't possibly do, even under the most generous circumstances. What's more,

> That a devaluation of the housewife and mother has been achieved in both our popular culture and our public policy—largely by feminists—is difficult to deny. Perhaps less apparent has been the simultaneous devaluation of the home. Part of the older ideal of the home entailed the notion of a sacrosanct haven from the sometimes harsh, market-driven realities of the competitive economy, a place where man and woman could exercise a high degree of autonomy within a limited sphere. That freedom was, of course, circumscribed by the needs and demands of other family members—primarily one's children, whose education and moral formation took precedence. But within that sphere of genuine freedom, there was a recognition of the vast possibilities and responsibilities, particularly for the wife and mother: to create a home environment and bring up the children precisely as one wishes—no small power.

Robertson fears that the full consequences of our child neglect will manifest themselves in the next generation, when the children who grew up under the new dispensation come of age. And they will fall most heavily on elderly women like the Elinor Burkett of 2030, as she wonders whatever happened to all those good-for-nothing spawn who were supposed to pay her Social Security. ◆



Museum of Flight / CORBIS

Fortress America

The survival of democracy from 1946 to 1989.

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Was the price of victory in the Cold War the creation of a "garrison state" in the United States? Did we have to create "Fortress America," which signaled to liberals a dangerous militarization of American society, even as conservatives worried about a new federal octopus whose tentacles increasingly strangled personal liberty and free enterprise?

In the Shadow of the Garrison State
America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy
by Aaron L. Friedberg
Princeton Univ. Press, 416 pp., $69.50

Not really, argues Aaron Friedberg in his engaging revisionist history of American society during the Cold War, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State*. Given the enormity of the Soviet challenge and the growing complexity of the twentieth-century battlefield, Friedberg believes that America remained surprisingly true to its allegiance to personal freedom and individualism. The real wonder, he adds, was not the growth in the defense budget between 1945 and 1990 (though the rise of domestic spending in fact far outpaced military expenditures), but that it rose so slowly. Indeed, Friedberg goes further still, suggesting that it was because the American struggle was waged largely by enterprising individuals, and not state bureaucracies, that we won and the Soviets lost.

To prove his case, Friedberg looks at fifty years of defense budgets, the size of the draft, the nature of industrial production, and the growth of government-sponsored research and development. His conclusions are startling: Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, defense outlays as a percentage of gross national product remained remarkably modest and static at below 10 percent—despite occasional spikes during the Korean War, the Sputnik crisis, and Vietnam.

Moreover, taxes were cut as often as they were raised. Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy alike repeatedly pruned back—often in the face of fierce congressional opposition—military requests for new programs and weapons. Even before the draft was dismantled on June 30, 1973, the rise in deferments and the military's relatively modest demands meant that there was little chance that Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six would actually be drafted. The share of eligible young men drafted fell from 6 percent in 1953 to less than 0.5 percent by 1960. In other words, we won the

Victor Davis Hanson is author, most recently, of The Land Was Everything *(Free Press).*

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peace with just about the right degree of military preparedness and kept true to our heritage in the process.

But surely the military-industrial complex, which Eisenhower himself warned against, was a real threat to the republic? Actually, hardly at all, Friedberg believes. Local resistance thwarted vast plans for industrial dispersal. High tariffs to protect the arms industry were rare. Most good weapons programs were not the dividend of federal research centers or national arsenals. Navy yards, for example, gradually lost their hold on fleet construction. In fact, in historical terms, the government in the Cold War bought a much greater percentage of its weapons from private suppliers than at any time in its history, and quite consistently selected privately produced arms over its own in-house arsenal designs—as the M-16 rifle, the Pershing missile, and innumerable types of fighter aircraft attest. Nor was military research centralized by the federal bureaucracy, but rather bid out to private universities and laboratories on a competitive basis. The result was that there was nothing in America anything like the huge monolithic military-industrial complexes common in Soviet Russia and China.

Friedberg offers several reasons America remained true to its traditions even in the face of the Soviet peril: the Founders' system of government checks and balances, the citizenry's deeply ingrained distrust of federal government, and the reactionary antics of states-rights advocates and populist agitators. But Friedberg also points to heroic individuals who warned that we could defeat the Soviet Union and in the process still lose our liberty, by creating our own totalitarian state here at home. Friedrich Hayek and the phenomenal success of his book *The Road to Serfdom* in the late 1940s loom large, as do warnings from the likes of George Orwell and Lewis Mumford. Hard-nosed cabinet members in the Eisenhower administration, Charles Wilson and Rowland Hughes, remained cool in the face of frequent national hysteria and consistently tabled proposals for state intervention in arms production and control of American industry.

Critics might argue that Friedberg draws too neat a separation between the private and public sphere. They might ask how "private" are private firms that depend on subsidized government research contracts, federal sales subsidies overseas, and a vast array of former military officers as salesmen and procurement officers. Leftists will point to programs from the M-14 rifle to the Manhattan Project as proof that government can do the necessarily dirty business of producing weapons without involving profit-mongering merchants of death. And rightists will argue that freedom is constantly in danger from a vast array of paramilitary forces like those of the Drug Enforcement Agency and lament the enormous land in the west expropriated for huge training bases.

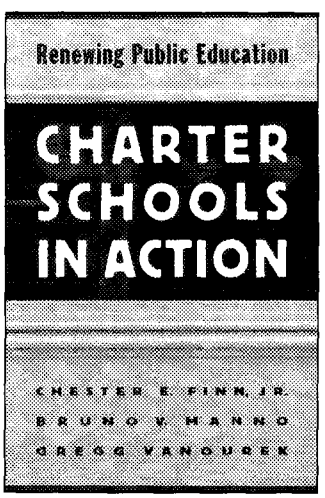
But Friedberg's argument is one of degree, as he believes that, save for the Johnson administration during Vietnam, we did as well as we could, given a half century of Soviet expansionism: "Suspicion of government power and institutionalized obstacles to its exercise have served the American people well over the past two hundred years. When these constraints grow too weak, as they did in the 1960s, the results can be deeply damaging to the nation's foreign policy, economic performance, and social cohesion."

Friedberg's *In the Shadow of the Garrison State* is not always easy going, with too much political science jargon ("mechanisms of power creation") and those arrow-filled diagrams that impede rather than facilitate understanding. Friedberg might also have noted that the private fabrication and possession of arms, militias, civilian control of the military, and popular suspicion of state industry is a deeply ingrained Western phenomenon that goes back to classical antiquity. Nonetheless—for those of us who have argued the unique power of democracies to field fearsome and yet moral armies in times of war—Friedberg performs a real service: reminding us that democracies do a pretty good job of keeping the peace as well. ♦

Charter Schools in Action

Renewing Public Education

Chester E. Finn, Jr., Bruno V. Manno, and Gregg Vanourek



Charter schools—independently operated public schools of choice—have existed in the United States only since 1992, yet there are already over 1,500 of them. Here prominent education analysts Chester Finn, Bruno Manno, and Gregg Vanourek offer the richest data available on the successes and failures of this controversial approach to education reform.

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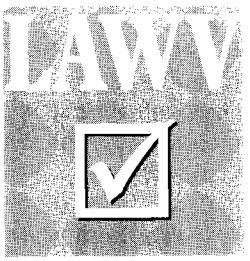

LEAGUE OF ANGRY WOMEN VOTERS

VOTER GUIDE • Race for New York Senate

Womyn,

This has been a time of indecision for many of us. Since Donna Hanover decided to take over from her husband (sic), Rudolph Giuliani, as the Republican nominee for Senate, many of us in the First Wives community have been unable to commit. One day we lean toward Hillary, the next toward Donna. This voter guide is intended to help us sort through the many issues that will confront us this fall.

	HANOVER	CLINTON
• Reason for running	Revenge	Spite
• Leading issue	Impeach Mayor Giuliani	Mandatory chemical castration
• Goal	Sole custody	Presidency
• Favorite movie	*The Godfather*	*Thelma & Louise*
• Greatest role	*The Vagina Monologues*	First lady
• Unfilled staff positions	Press secretary	Interns
• Announced candidacy on	The Lifetime channel	*Designing Women* reunion
• Celebrity pal	Kathie Lee Gifford	Lorena Bobbitt
• Campaign symbol	Mace	Flying lamp

the weekly Standard
May 22, 2000

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It's about Time

John E. Chubb is chief education officer, Edison Schools; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

How would you like to see *all* children—rich and poor, in cities, suburbs, and rural areas—learn more than ever before? Sound good? Then how do you feel about kids going to school an extra four weeks a year?

For at least a generation now, we have been debating how to improve our country's schools. Yet we've barely discussed the one idea that may make the most sense: more time in school.

It is widely agreed that **what students in past generations learned will not be sufficient for today's students or the future of our country.** Thus, schools are asking students to meet higher standards in every subject area and to use the knowledge they acquire, not just remember it. The problem is that schools are asking students to meet these new standards in exactly the same time they were given to meet the standards of the past! But learning takes time.

The best time is during the two weeks at either end of the summer. Under this plan, the school year would run from roughly August 15 to June 30, making it 200 days instead of the current American norm of 180. **Summer vacation would last six weeks instead of ten.**

The benefits of such a change could be enormous. First, students forget some of what they learn during the school year, forcing teachers to spend part of each new school year on review rather than on new material. Second, economically disadvantaged students forget much more each summer than other students—perhaps three times as much. This difference in learning, which accumulates summer after summer, helps explain the wide achievement gap that separates inner-city high school students from students in the suburbs. A shorter summer might reduce this gap and raise the achievement of all students, including those at the top.

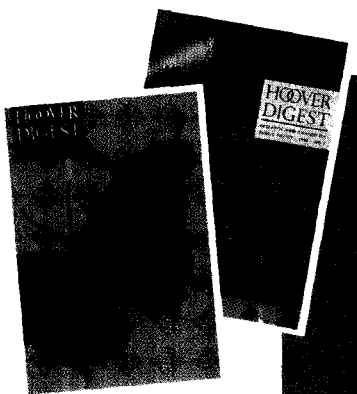
Parents are unenthusiastic. But a six-week summer break is ample time for most family vacations, for camp, sports, and other forms of learning, or for older children to earn some necessary income.

Of course, there is always the matter of cost. A longer year requires a possible 10 percent increase in operating costs. Yet we have increased what we spend on education by much more than that over the past generation. And what do we have to show for it? Less than we might expect from an investment in more time.

Parents and students in Edison Schools, run by a private company that helps public school systems set up state-of-the-art schools, have been willing to give part of every summer over to schooling, squeezing the extra cost out of existing education budgets. And achievement growth has been strong for all students. **Since Edison began operating schools five years ago, thirty-six communities in sixteen states have embraced the longer school year** and worked with Edison to implement it in nearly eighty schools. Stretching the school year into the summer is not only sensible but also possible.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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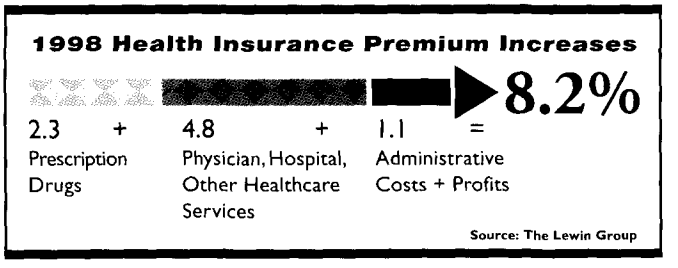
PREMIUM INCREASES: THE FACTS, NOT THE MYTH

by Alan F. Holmer, President and CEO
Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America

In the headlines, on the talk shows, around kitchen tables and board rooms across the country, people are complaining about rising health insurance premiums. What's behind these premium increases? Although it may be tempting to round up the usual suspects and blame increased prescription drugs costs for the premium rises, the facts tell a different story.

According to the latest data on national health spending, total private health insurance premiums increased 8.2 percent in 1998. An analysis of these data shows that about 60 percent of this increase was due to increased spending on hospitals, physicians and other health care services, and only about a quarter of the increase reflected increased spending on prescription drugs. But although there are loud complaints about increased drug spending, you rarely hear anyone blaming premium increases on the fact that people are seeing their doctors more often.

A lot of other factors are driving premium increases. There's a strong labor market. That means that, in order to attract and keep top talent, employers are offering richer benefit packages. In addition, insurers are competing to meet growing consumer demand for less restrictive health plans and greater access to specialists and advanced medical technology – all of which add to health premium costs. There's also our aging population. Older patients go to the doctor more often, are hospitalized more often, have more chronic diseases and need more costly and intensive health care services than the younger population.



Increased spending on prescription drugs means that more people, under their doctor's supervision, are taking more and better medicines – and that's a good thing. It means that patients are benefiting from innovative and cost-effective new treatments. Last year alone, 40 new medicines were added to the nation's medicine cabinet. These include advances in the treatment of AIDS, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, Parkinson's and many other diseases. These and other medicines save lives and improve the quality of life for patients. In many cases, they also keep people out of hospitals and nursing homes, helping them avoid surgery.

Examples of such cost-effectiveness tradeoffs abound. In a year-long disease management program run by Humana Hospitals for about 1,100 patients with congestive heart failure, drug costs increased by 60 percent, while hospital costs declined by 78 percent. The net savings were $9.3 million. And the human savings were even greater: the patients' ability to perform the activities of daily living – a good indicator of quality of life – went up 15 percent, while the death rate fell 15 percent.

Employers, who pay a large share of health insurance premiums, can also realize savings from increased use of newer and better medicines. A recent study showed that a new drug for migraine headaches saved $435 per month per treated employee due to a reduction in absenteeism and lost productivity costs, while the monthly cost of the drug per patient was only $44.00. Depression also places a huge economic burden on employers. But, according to a study published in the journal *Health Economics*, medical costs declined by $822 per employee per year and absenteeism dropped by nine days when workers with depression were treated with prescription medicines.

Health care is changing. Prescription drugs, which once played only a minor role, are now the preferred treatment for a wide range of conditions. This means more people are staying on the job and taking care of their families. And even though prescription medicines are playing a bigger role in health care, they still account for only a small percentage of total health care costs – just over eight percent in 1998. Health plans clearly realize that prescription drugs can be cost-effective and that their members would much rather take a pill than undergo surgery. Not surprisingly, they are turning increasingly to these treatments.

So, next time you hear the myth that prescription drugs are the major cause of escalating insurance premiums, don't believe it. Cost-effective medicines deliver one of the biggest values in health care.

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